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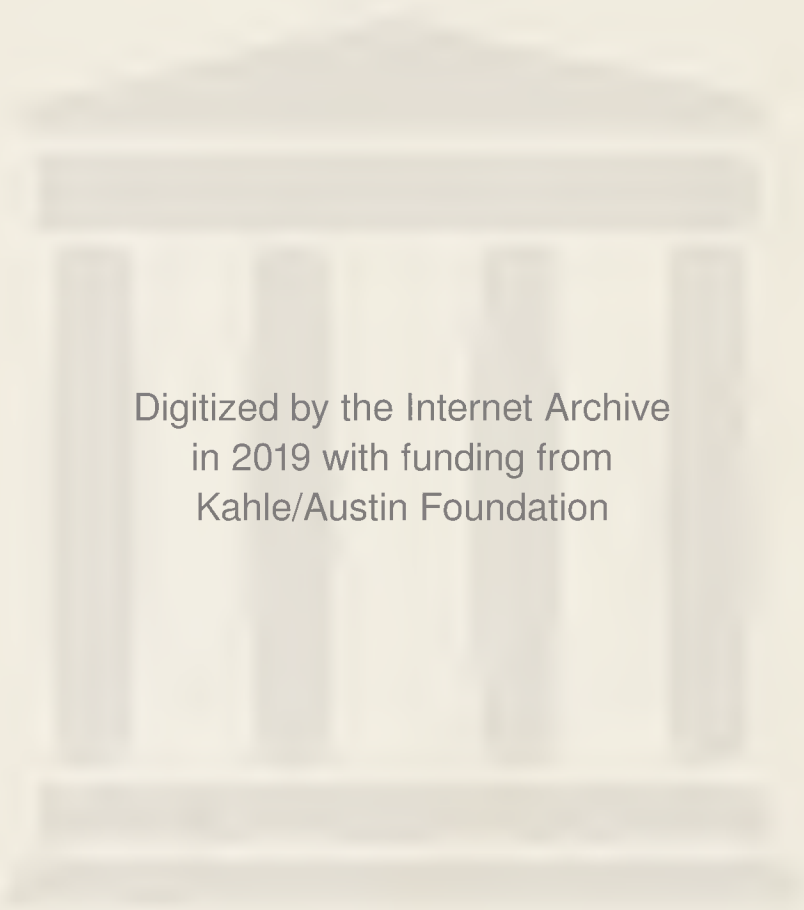

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MADAME D'EPINAY

MEMOIRS AND CORRESPONDENCE

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MADAME D'EPINAY
(*Carmontelle*)

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MEMOIRS AND CORRESPONDENCE OF MADAME D'EPINAY

Translated with an Introduction by
E. G. Allingham

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live with another aunt, an unpleasant woman, married to a pleasant man, M. La Live de Bellegarde, a farmer-general, and very rich. Louise Florence Pétronille d'Esclavelles (which was Madame d'Epinay's maiden name) was not a pretty girl, but she was attractive, and she aroused an infatuation in her cousin, the eldest son of M. de Bellegarde (Denis-Joseph la Live d'Epinay), a young man only too easily attracted. Her aunt, who opposed the match, died, and the amiable M. de Bellegarde sanctioned the union of the pair. Straightway the girl, brought up in straitened circumstances, rather seriously and religiously disposed, though superficially educated, entered, as the wife of a wealthy man, into the most seductive social life in Europe—a world of wit and great external refinement, but as Rousseau put it, composed of "persons with a high sense of propriety and no morals". The male portion of this society were, for the main part, entirely leisured men. If they had any definite occupation it only claimed a portion of their time, and left them long hours for pleasure. These leisure hours were consecrated to the company of women. Women only entered society after marriage on leaving their convent schools. Moreover, as in the case of Madame d'Houdetot's marriage (described by Madame d'Epinay) brides were accustomed to accept husbands chosen for them, though a few marriages were made for love, Madame d'Epinay's own for one. A young married woman would have her "set" of friends, some of whom she met daily at her house or theirs. Dinner was at one o'clock. The afternoon was spent in amusing themselves—they read, had a concert among themselves—sometimes a party of friends would act a play written by one of them. The men would draw or paint, the ladies would sew, there was conversation on every possible topic. In the evening there would be little intimate suppers, or a party would

go to the theatre or a ball. Such an existence—pleasant in its way—indolent, self-indulgent—such intimacy between men and women solely occupied in self-distraction provided a suitable atmosphere for love, and anyone unhappily mated was likely to find someone more congenial. Madame d'Epinay's marriage was entirely unfortunate, for her husband combined no morals with no sense of propriety either. He was hopelessly loose in his conduct and a spendthrift as well. His wife was disillusioned and very unhappy. Social intercourse being as it was, and marriages being what they were, it was practically impossible to keep the young and amorous in the strict path of morality, excuse had to be found for frailty, and it was found in declamation against the puritanic precepts of outworn morality, and in the hailing of a newer code that decreed that free love—the love freely given that is to say—was all-binding and all-sacred—only it must, or should be, one love and not many loves, the ideal being to keep to one lover or one mistress. Madame d'Houdetot and Monsieur d'Houdetot afford an instance of this sort of fidelity, for hers was a lifelong fidelity to a lover,[1] and his constancy till death to a mistress.

Madame d'Epinay's circle was composed of charming but frivolous women—among them Madame d'Arty, mistress of the Prince de Conti, La Présidente de Maupeou, and Madame d'Houdetot. Her circle of males included her own husband, intelligent and gifted; M. de Francueil, an accomplished, charming man and a scientist as well; Saint-Lambert, soldier-poet, was another friend, and so was the Marquis de Croismare. Greater men that she knew well were Rousseau, Duclos and Grimm.

After her disenchantment Madame d'Epinay yearned for consolation, and, influenced by a friend,

[1] The Marquis de Saint-Lambert.

was not long in taking a lover, which lover was M. de Francueil.

But M. de Francueil proved unsatisfactory, and then Madame d'Epinay was like a ship adrift on a sea she was not built to navigate. She was a woman whose natural impulses were all good and sincere, she was born to be a faithful wife and devoted mother. The latter she was, but the first she had no chance to be. She was weak, anxious to please, timid of offending, easily led and unguarded. Wavering and vacillating, she pleased no one. Her unsatisfactory liaison with Francueil was no secret, and as her sensible confessor informed her, she was in the position of every disillusioned woman, possessed of a heart that cannot rest unemployed. This was her state when Rousseau introduced his friend Grimm to her. Her friendship that developed into passionate love for Grimm marks a definite epoch in her life, dividing it into two halves, the period that preceded that introduction and the period that followed. "Do not miss your vocation," he said to her, for he detected great inner resources, and saw what Nature had designed her to be. Through him she did eventually conform to that design, though not before Duclos, first friend, then tyrant, would-be lover, and finally implacable enemy, had labelled her to all Paris a flighty woman, and Mademoiselle d'Ette, former bosom friend, had grossly maligned her. Nor did Grimm assume control of her destiny and exercise supreme influence until the influence of Rousseau had been dispelled.

Francueil, to amuse his mistress, had inaugurated theatrical performances at La Chevrette, the country seat of M. de Bellegarde. He was a good actor, and she, at first indifferent, caught the fever for acting and showed considerable talent, and for the time being she and her friends were crazy on amateur theatricals. They performed a play written by Rousseau. The

author was introduced to her by Francueil. She took a great fancy to him. Rousseau has drawn a picture of himself as he was about that time. He had achieved literary fame, and was courted by people of higher social status than himself. Shy, unadaptable, unable to live any life but his own, he adopted the affectation of contempt for social graces and customs, and assumed a bearish manner. Madame d'Epinay's own description of the awkward young author with the beautiful eyes tallies with his own description of himself. His affectation went down very well, for people usually put up with rudeness in geniuses, and Madame d'Epinay liked having a pet bear. He has been called her lover, and Grimm has undoubtedly left it on record that Rousseau was very much in love with her, although he adds the qualifying statement that Rousseau was in that condition with regard to every woman who admitted him to her friendship. According to Rousseau's statement, she was thin and lacked the opulence of charm which was necessary for the awakening of physical desire in himself. There is nothing in her memoirs or letters to indicate that there was more than friendship (with possibly a little philandering) between them. That he was her lover in the real sense there is no proof whatever.

Her friendship with Rousseau, in its early days, was charming, and the fascination of that strange temperament is apparent in the conversations and incidents that she retails. He obviously liked her also very much. But she had warnings that all was not plain sailing with such a man as he. "Have an esteem for him," said Duclos, "but don't go any further." Rousseau himself warned her that he liked to be let alone. But she, like many kind people, was apt to slop the milk of human kindness too freely over her fellow-creatures, and she replied to Rousseau that she could not promise to comply with his wishes

in this respect. In fact, however much she may say in her defence in her memoirs, she was obviously too fond of meddling with the affairs of others, which was precisely what Grimm warned her not to do, and what gave those whom she offended a handle for calling her intriguing.

Rousseau one day came to Madame d'Epinay in great perplexity. He was sick of Paris and wished to leave the city. He had received an offer of an appointment in Geneva, which, however, he had reasons for not wishing to accept. Madame d'Epinay thereupon offered him a little house on her husband's estate. It was a lonely little house—the Hermitage—situated within the forest of Montmorency. Rousseau, ungraciously, did not disguise the fact that he hesitated to accept her offer for fear that by so doing he might forfeit personal liberty and find himself tied through obligation. Finally he did accept, and she had the house done up and made comfortable for him. Grimm was not pleased with the arrangement and warned her that she was making a grave mistake in having him there at all.

Rousseau started by being enchanted with his abode, but he did not long abide in this mood, and his grievance that he had too much of his hostess is a little borne out by her own statements. He evidently had to be more at her house than suited him, and he was bored by her visits and solicitude. She on her side began to be disenchanted, though still very friendly.

Three quarrels marked his sojourn at the Hermitage.

Diderot, Rousseau's great friend, was afflicted, as was Madame d'Epinay, with too great an interest in the concerns of other people. Rousseau said that every quarrel he had with Diderot was due to Diderot having a different idea of his duty than he had, and trying to force his ideas on him (Rousseau). Diderot,

prejudiced against Madame d'Epinay by Duclos and others, was sorry to see Rousseau installed on her estate. Moreover, though Rousseau liked solitude, Diderot did not, and could not understand how anyone could like it. He endeavoured to induce Rousseau to quit his retreat, but pushed interference too far and a rumpus ensued. Madame d'Epinay had no hand in this quarrel except for the efforts she made to reconcile the friends.

The second quarrel was of a very different character. Madame d'Houdetot, Madame d'Epinay's sister-in-law, was living near her at the time. Madame d'Houdetot's husband and Madame d'Houdetot's lover, Saint-Lambert, were both with the army in Westphalia. Madame d'Houdetot had lonely walks and lonely talks with Rousseau in the forest. He fell violently in love with her, and Madame d'Epinay may have been a little jealous. Suddenly Saint-Lambert turned up to see what his lady was about, and thereupon Rousseau accused Madame d'Epinay of prying, of questioning his women-folk, and of having written to Saint-Lambert giving himself and her sister-in-law away. This charge she indignantly denied, and it seems perfectly unfounded. Her own lover, Grimm, was in the army, he and Saint-Lambert were together, and the men were close friends. She corresponded regularly with Grimm, told him everything, and what more natural than that he should pass on information to Saint-Lambert?

The third quarrel brought the friendship to an end. When Grimm returned from the army he found Madame d'Epinay in very bad health, and it was settled that she should go to Geneva to consult the celebrated Dr. Tronchin. Then Diderot again interfered, and suggested that it was Rousseau's duty to accompany his benefactress to Geneva, although Madame d'Epinay herself had expressed no very ardent

desire to have him. This led to the composition of Rousseau's famous letter to Grimm, that masterpiece of ingratitude towards the woman who had shown him unfailing kindness, which letter, in its turn, led naturally to the severance of all relations between himself and Grimm and Madame d'Epinay. Diderot at the same time completed the chain of quarrels by talking to all Paris (or so Rousseau said) of the d'Houdetot-Rousseau affair. Then Rousseau in his preface to his *Lettre sur les Spectacles* publicly denounced him as a dishonourable betrayer of confidence, after which there was an irreconcilable breach between the two old friends, a breach which Diderot did, later, try to repair, but which Rousseau would never consent to patch up.

Of all this business Rousseau, in his *Confessions*, and Madame d'Epinay in her *Mémoires*, have given their respective and conflicting accounts. If a little is to be subtracted from Madame d'Epinay's statements here and there, if she gives herself away now and again, to a far greater extent is this the case with Rousseau's *Confessions*, in which he displays himself as so suspicious and so quarrelsome that it seems incredible that even the greatest admirers of his genius can accept, without reservation, the charges he brings against those with whom he is aggrieved.

In his *Confessions*, which he read to a select number of friends during the winter of 1770–1, he gave a very unpleasant description of Madame d'Epinay, and insinuated that his reason for refusing to accompany her to Geneva was that she was pregnant, that Grimm was the father of the child to be, and he (Rousseau) was afraid of being let in for trouble if he went with her. Madame d'Epinay, when this came to her ears, was so greatly perturbed that she petitioned the Minister of the Police, M. de Sartine, to cause the readings to be stopped.

The calumny, however, is easy to refute. Madame d'Epinay was not with child. As MM. Perey and Maugras have pointed out, there is no record at Geneva of the birth of a foreigner's child at that time, nor of the death of a foreigner's child, and is it likely that supposing she had been pregnant, she would have gone to Geneva where she would meet Voltaire and know all the society of the place, and moreover have gone there accompanied by her husband, her son, and son's tutor? The truth is that she already had the symptoms of the cancer of the stomach from which she eventually died, and on account of the grave state of her health went to consult the physician.

M. Faguet considers that the *Confessions* were written as a defence against attacks made by the Epinay-Diderot-Grimm group, after the quarrel, on Rousseau, and the *Mémoires* were compiled as a defence against attacks made on them in the *Confessions*. Perey and Maugras also agree that probably Rousseau's reading of his *Confessions* decided Madame d'Epinay to complete her *Mémoires* in order that she might at least be vindicated in the eyes of her friends. But what does not appear to have any sufficient foundation is the charge that has been brought against her of having been assisted by Grimm and Diderot in the fabrication or "cooking" of her *Mémoires*. In the first place, diaries were all the *mode* at that time. Everyone kept a register of impressions, and soul-experiences and so on. Madame d'Epinay began her *Mémoires* about 1757, long before the reading of the *Confessions*. Moreover, they were not intended for publication. Perey and Maugras in their preface to what may be called the supplementary *Mémoires* of Madame d'Epinay —*La Jeunesse de Madame d'Epinay* and *Les Dernières Années de Madame d'Epinay*—quote documentary evidence, in her own handwriting, to the effect that

she had no intention of publishing her work. She read her *Mémoires* only to a few friends quite privately.

Grimm, to whom she bequeathed all her papers, merely referred to them in his obituary notice of Madame d'Epinay in his *Correspondance Littéraire* as "a sketch of a long novel", and did not publish the MSS.

As for the charge that the latter part of the *Mémoires* are a good deal based on memory, the same charge can be brought against the *Confessions* also.

It is in the obvious straightforwardness of all that she has written that Madame d'Epinay's defence is to be found. MM. Perey and Maugras discovered in the *Archives Nationales* and the *Bibliothèque de l'Arsenal* an immense mass of Madame d'Epinay's original MS. that the publishers of the *Mémoires* had left untouched. From this they collected the matter for the supplementary *Mémoires* referred to—selecting to a large extent material that had reference to family concerns and private life rather than to public affairs and persons, and obviously unfaked, and one has only to compare the supplement with the first edition to see that the same hand is responsible for both, and that there is the same air of truthfulness and naturalness about the one as the other. It is obvious that only one hand, and that a woman's, produced these *Mémoires*. Grimm's influence and Diderot's is discernible and so is Rousseau's—but no male hand guided her pen. The *Confessions* themselves are the best refutation of the venomous statements they contain. That work, a monument of genius, is withal a monument of a distorted mind, a tortured mind, a mind most aptly described by Grimm as one "at once too strong and too weak to bear with patience the burden of life".

To quote from MM. Perey and Maugras: "We have compared the MSS. of the *Mémoires* with Diderot's letters to Mlle Volland, with the *Correspondance Littéraire* of Grimm,

the *Correspondance* of Voltaire, and the *Mémoires* of Marmontel, and even with the *Confessions* of J. J. Rousseau, and we say definitely that after a most exact and conscientious survey we have arrived at the conclusion, and are absolutely convinced, that the *Mémoires* are in all essentials reliable.

Letters cited by Madame d'Epinay have a verisimilitude about them that is unmistakeable. If the introduction of a certain amount of detail, for the sake of piecing the letters into the narrative, is noticeable, one has only to read the letters of M. de Preux, Madame de Roncherolles, Madame de Maupéou, of Grimm and Rousseau to feel sure that they have not been invented. We have proof of this in autograph letters handled by us, and by the fact that MM. Brunet and Parison declare that they have had in their possession all Rousseau's letters and certify that the letters are identical. In the face of so much and such clear proof we consider that the authenticity of these letters is unquestionable.

The same holds good with regard to persons described. There again it is impossible to doubt the truthfulness of the delineation of character and justice of observation. Read Diderot's portrait of Mlle d'Ette, Madame de Verdelin's description of Margency in her letters, Saint-Lambert's description of M. d'Houdetot, and more curious still, of Madame d'Houdetot, in his *Correspondance:* read, lastly, in all contemporary memoirs, the description of Président de Maupéou, and you will find, point for point, the same characteristics, qualities, and faults indicated by the master hand of Madame d'Epinay. Push the comparison further. In her many complaints against her husband one might fancy there was some exaggeration—but no, the Archives provide incontestable evidence of the frightful extravagance and disgraceful behaviour of M. d'Epinay towards his wife."

There are persons whose mentalities—fascinating, perverse and curious—live on to disturb long after the bodies they distressed are supposed to be at rest. Impartiality is rarely achieved in their regard, be they living or dead. A person of this sort was Rousseau, and impartiality is not what his English champion, Mrs. Macdonald, in two volumes devoted to his

defence, has attained. Her book rather serves to render intricacy more intricate, and fails to invalidate the arguments set forth in MM. Perey and Maugras' readable and reasonable pages.

Mrs. Macdonald has raked together a heap of "proof" from MSS. in the *Archives* and *Arsenal* (also ransacked by MM. Perey and Maugras)—copybooks of Madame d'Epinay's unpublished MS. revised, rewritten, retouched by various hands: she has compared letters quoted in the *Mémoires* with letters known to be authentic, and found the former wanting in accuracy. Her researches have convinced her that Schérer's statement that Grimm escaped the notice of his contemporaries was correct (whereas some of the most celebrated of these contemporaries clearly loved and admired him): that Madame d'Epinay altered her MS. to suit the ill-natured Grimm and Diderot and inserted lies and calumny: that Rousseau, the reviver of romantic love, the purifier of morals, could not possibly have abandoned his own offspring: he had no children, says Mrs. Macdonald.

This advocacy is overdone and defeats its own end, and does not alter the fact that the *Confessions* confound Rousseau's nobler utterances, and that there are geniuses, of whom Rousseau is one, who have failed to elevate their lives to the height of their own conceptions. Lesser men cannot conceive so greatly, it is often the tragedy of genius that it can do so.

Let us admit that there are discrepancies, contradictions, inaccuracies and so forth. Grimm described the Epinay MS. as the raw material of a long novel (though Mrs. Macdonald attributes a base design to this assertion). It is true that the authoress herself disclaimed any intention of publishing it. At the same time Grimm's reply on the receipt of her MS when she first showed it to him suggests an intention on her part of giving her work to the world. Therefore

it may be presumed that she did so intend at one time, but later thought better of the idea. And if the MS. was really the draft of a sort of rambling novel in diary form, certain excursions from fact into fiction would be the natural thing to expect, and slight inaccuracies in letters and conversations recorded from memory would not detract from the general truthfulness of the picture as a whole. Revision and alteration, even notes and suggestions in other handwritings or whole pages in the handwriting of a secretary might not necessarily brand an authoress a liar nor prove her the meek slave of another mind.

After her rupture with Rousseau, Madame d'Epinay gave herself up to the guidance of Grimm. Her passion for this lover (so ill-spoken of by Rousseau, but who kept every other friend he had, and of whom Diderot said: " If ever I were to grumble about my lot, Providence would have the right to retort, I gave you Grimm for a friend ") was tinged, like all great passions and great art and great beauty, with sadness. She was kind but weak. He was kind but rigid. When she wavered, hesitating to give Francueil his *congé*, Grimm saw to it that Francueil was dismissed. Duclos, meddling, overbearing and rough, was, through Grimm's influence, got rid of. Grimm was a bit of a despot himself, though a benevolent one. He and she were the complement, the one of the other. But she with her temperament was the one who was bound to suffer. She shared him—not with another woman, for he was constant and devoted to her in his own way which was not quite her way. His long absences which his literary correspondence with foreign Courts entailed were very trying to her, and probably the absences cost her more than they did him. Moreover, a liaison such as theirs (though usual enough at the time) between two persons who made considerable profession of " la morale ", in an age in

which, as Saint Marc-Girardin says, "la morale" was more corrupt than "les mœurs", was bound to have its awkward side. This is clearly shown in the letter in which Grimm rather pathetically refers to the great carefulness of Madame d'Epinay's behaviour before her children and the way in which they two tried to atone for a perfectly inevitable lapse (under the circumstances) by lives righteously and kindly lived. Reading between the lines of her *Mémoires*, the suspicion faintly assails one whether, sincerely as he loved her, he did find her possibly a little fatiguing, and may have found correspondence with her more congenial than her company—at intervals at any rate.

Diderot, writing to Mlle Volland, describes Grimm as wedded to his work. "Son amie est souvent sacrifiée," wrote he. "He has hardly a minute for friendship, and I know not when he has a moment for love." He recounted how once when Grimm had arranged to meet them (Diderot and Madame d'Epinay) in Paris, he completely forgot the engagement and never turned up.

The tears came to Madame d'Epinay's eyes, and, weeping, she said, "He is so busy, he never remembers anything: he is greatly to be pitied, and so am I." Diderot making no reply, she asked, "But, Philosopher, you don't reply—surely you don't think he no longer loves me?" And, added Diderot, "What could one say? Tell the truth?—Impossible! A lie was absolutely necessary. She must stay blind, for the day her eyes are opened will be her last." But Diderot was apt to be carried away by the sound of his own voice, and Grimm no doubt loved his mistress according to his manner of loving.

She owed much to this rather tyrannical, inflexible lover. It was Grimm who took her out of the loose set to whom she was indebted for her loss of reputation; it was he who taught her to find herself.

"For heaven's sake do not miss your vocation," he had told her. "It rests with yourself to be the happiest, most adorable creature on this earth, if you will but cease to be guided by other people, and will be sufficient unto yourself." To suffer herself to be guided, not to be self-sufficing nor self-respecting, was the feminine ideal of Rousseau, and by Rousseau's ideas Madame d'Epinay had been greatly influenced.

When she returned from Geneva to Paris it was to a different life and sphere. She had, for one thing, left Paris a wealthy woman, she returned, already shadowed by the poverty which owing to her husband's extravagance was presently to overtake her. She had quitted Paris unpopular in many quarters owing to the ill-word of Duclos, Rousseau and others who, for mistakes mainly due to lack of judgment and indecision, disliked her. She returned stiffened in character to a social circle of Grimm's selection, composed of persons different from those of the pre-Geneva days. Gradually she outlived her (not really very bad) past. Grimm, occupied with his *Correspondance Littéraire*, had no time for play, and she, too, played no more. She assisted him in his literary labours. Diderot, so long alienated, became her firm friend. To her *salon* came such men as Saurin, Suard, Sedaine, Damilaville, Raynal and Galiani. She lived in the centre of the political and philosophical life of her day, and not only did she become one of the most distinguished society women but one of the most respected. She knew all the most celebrated men of letters and she wrote herself.

Madame d'Epinay greatly fancied herself as an authoress, though most of the verses, plays, etc. that proceeded from her pen were of the ephemeral kind. It is in her *Mémoires*, not intended for publication, that she lives. She had not much imagination, but excelled in the epistolatory style of writing, that is to

say she could admirably and most aptly describe the local details of life and the personages that crossed her path, and only when she indulges in the sentimentality then the mode, or imitates the philosophers, does she lose the charming freshness and colour of her style. The *Mémoires* she strung loosely together in a long novel of the diary-form, giving the characters fictitious names, as for instance Grimm became Volx; Rousseau, Réné; herself, Madame de Montbrillant, and so on.

One book, *Les Conversations d'Emilie*, written when she was confined to her bed in her final illness, gained for her Le prix d'Utilité de l'Académie Française in 1783. This formed part of a general treatise on education. Madame d'Epinay was vastly interested in education. When under Rousseau's spell she for a time out-Rousseaued Rousseau, as her letters to her son, aged ten, clearly prove, letters which Rousseau very properly condemned as not only unsuitable for a person of ten, but even for one of twenty years. The unfortunate little son was hopelessly muddled by the educational system adopted by his mother, who asked for and wavered between everyone's advice on education and who forced the tone of Rousseau's theories with frightful gravity—by his father's system, only designed to render him socially agreeable, and by his tutor's methods, those of a man of very limited views. The boy turned out his father's own son, and exceedingly frivolous. His mother admitted her failure when she told Diderot that once she had been most indignant with Rousseau for saying that parents were not cut out for training children, but that now she knew he was right.

With her daughter she was, however, successful. For one thing the child was in her sole charge, for another she had gradually departed from the rigid observance of Rousseau's doctrines. The negative

system of *Emile* was never quite to her mind, and she discovered that the system of "work without working" was unworkable. She admitted to Galiani that she had learnt by experience that children must be made to put their noses to the grindstone. Her friends were wont to refer to her son as *Monsieur* d'Epinay's son, but her daughter was her very own. She was educated by her mother, seconded by two excellent governesses, Mlle Durand and Mlle Derville, and very different was the tone of the suggestions for the child's daily time-table, given in a letter to Mlle Durand and published in a collection of fragments entitled *Mes Moments Heureux*, from the exaggerated solemnity of "letters to my son". The child was not to be scolded or punished, she was to be made to use her eyes and ears and learn from observation, and there was not to be much in the way of maxims and precepts. All that is left to desire is mention of a little offtime for the governess.

According to Madame d'Epinay's system, an educational course was to be divided into three parts or periods: (1) from six to ten years of age; (2) from ten to fourteen or fifteen years; (3) from fifteen onwards.

Les Conversations d'Emilie deal with the six to ten years' period and are conversations between a mother and child in which instruction is given in conversational form, the child questioning and the mother replying, and leading the child on to further inquiry. The child, Emilie, was Madame d'Epinay's own grandchild. Madame d'Epinay did not consider women suited for the political or administrative arena, nor did she allow her sex much of a standing in belles-lettres, philosophy or art. Languages and metaphysics she considered were not for women, nor sculpture nor architecture, nor even painting, because women very rarely had opportunity of beholding the *chefs-d'œuvres*

of the painter's art in foreign schools and "decency forbade them to study in the school of nature". However, she opened wide the study of literature to women—the realm of morals, of geography, history, and all social acquirements.

She considered it most important that women (their duties as mother, wife and daughter properly discharged) should devote time to study and to the development of their minds, this being "a sure way of becoming self-sufficing, free and independent, and a certain consolation for the blows dealt by Fate and by men" since from the latter "one need never look for so much consideration as when one can dispense with it".

In *Mes Moments Heureux* Madame d'Epinay draws an interesting picture of herself at the age of thirty. She describes herself as not at all pretty, though not ugly, as small, thin, but well proportioned. In spite of her pallor she was young-looking, with an expression interesting, noble and bright. Her mind was of the slow, reflective kind, her thought disconnected, her imagination of the tranquil order. She was lively, courageous, high-minded and exceedingly shy. She was truthful, but not frank, and for the furtherance of her own designs was sharpwitted enough, but no good at seeing through the designs of others. She was loving and warm by nature, constant and not a flirt.

Grimm speaks of her beautiful eyes, of her hair that grew prettily: Rousseau, admitting that she was not pretty, said that she was better than pretty: Diderot speaks of her languorous eyes, her white shoulders, her heavy locks, her pensive expression. Voltaire refers to the extreme fragility of her appearance.

What she had was not so much beauty as charm—the charm of a quick response, of a warm heart and a forgiving disposition. Hers was not a creative mind,

but highly perceptive: it could leap towards a mind more profound or powerful than her own, her thought could seize and work on another's thought. Given an idea, she could develop it, as it were a gem given her to cut and polish. She was thoroughly feminine and so is her writing. If further proof is required than the *Mémoires* themselves afford, that she was a lovable woman with a gift for friendship—which Grimm, Diderot and Galiani realised right well—that proof is to be found in the correspondence between her and Galiani. All that Grimm saw that she could be, all that she became is in those letters. The tributes paid her when she died by Grimm and Galiani are very characteristic of the two men.

Said Grimm: "Let those who would appreciate her at her true worth, just assume for a moment to be true the charges brought against her, when young, by the envious and malignant: then they will be bound to admire the strength of mind that enabled her, by her own unaided efforts, to live down the disadvantages of a too frivolous upbringing, and the rare qualities that raised her finally to the high position of esteem and regard that she attained in her later years."

Cried Galiani: "Madame d'Epinay is dead, then I no longer exist."

E. G. Allingham.

Memoirs and Correspondence of Madame d'Epinay

CHAPTER I

1735–1746

Monsieur Tardieu d'Esclavelles, Brigadier in the Infantry, died in the service of his King during the campaign of 1735, leaving his wife without means beyond a prospective pension barely sufficient to keep and educate their only child aged ten. To me, as their oldest friend, the wardship of the youthful Emilie was assigned.

An Aunt of M. d'Esclavelles, a Madame de Roncherolles, who, owing to reduced circumstances, lived in a convent in Paris, took my ward to live with her, whilst her mother repaired to her husband's old home to try and scrape together some leavings from a patrimony that has been largely expended in his country's service.

Madame de Roncherolles' retreat was shared by her granddaughter who, like herself, was the victim of the second marriage of the child's mother, for Madame de Roncherolles considered it better that a young lady of quality should live uncomfortably in a convent than on the charity of others. Thus in the sanctuary of misfortune, was formed that friendship between Mademoiselle de Roncherolles and my ward which Emilie records in her diary.

Mademoiselle de Roncherolles was lively, merry and very decided. Emilie, on the other hand, was

would never be so unjust. Believe me, I realise, as I ought, your kindly care for my interests, since my father's death. I wanted to thank you for it all, yesterday, only my heart was so full that I could not utter a word. The good-bye implied when you handed over your papers to my father-in-law was too much for me: the dear, kind words that accompanied this last act of your wardship brought the tears to my eyes: I hope you noticed them. I retired for a moment to get myself into a fit state to express my feelings and my gratitude, and when I returned, you had gone: I was worried all the rest of the evening. If only I had been sure that you had not been hurt by my silence, I should not have been so troubled. Dear Guardian, always be your ward's counsellor and friend and never refuse her your advice about anything. Reassure her quickly, and tell her that your friendship is as great as her gratitude, or in other words, that it is boundless and eternal."

Letter from Madame d'Epinay to Madame la Présidente de Maupeou

(Mademoiselle de Roncherolles had been married by the wish of her mother, to a man she disliked, Monsieur le Président de Maupeou, in 1744.)

I do feel cross with your mother, my dear cousin, for not having let you marry the man of your heart. It is simply lovely to be the beloved wife of the man one loves, and for whose sake one has gone through something. No, I cannot yet believe in my good luck. You used to pity me thinking that I should die of dullness in my father-in-law's house, once I began to see something of Society. Ah, how mistaken you were, cousin! My only tiresome moments, since my marriage, have been those when I have had to pay or return visits. Mine is indeed a happy state! Is my

heart big enough for so much bliss? sometimes it can hardly contain all the emotions that swell it. Was ever a son more respectful, more affectionate than M. d'Epinay, or husband more . . . Ah, cousin, words fail me, beside how can I tell you? for there are a thousand things that I cannot put into words but which I feel intensely. I want to tell you of the life that M. d'Epinay proposes that we shall lead. He reckons when his circuit is over, to save at first, during his six years of travelling, and then, if we can manage it, we shall start a home of our own. We shall go and dine with our relations twice a week. He says that we shall have two suppers, and one dinner a week. He wants to have a dinner as well as the two suppers, because it is the meal I prefer. Oh, he is good! as if I would not live as suits him best? I told him so, but that made no difference, he insists on the dinner. Then we shall have a concert to which all our friends can come, and on two other days we shall have some musicians just to play to us two. There now! I was forgetting the very thing I meant to write to you about. I am arranging to bring my husband to dine with you to-morrow, if you will be in. A word in reply. Good day. I end up in a hurry although I still have a thousand things to tell you, but it is dinner time, and I am not yet half ready.

Letter from Madame d'Epinay to Monsieur de Lisieux

My dear Guardian,—I am giving a fancy-dress ball on Thursday with my relations' consent, and you simply must come. I am so delighted: it will be lovely. I am going as a shepherdess, and so is Madame de Maupeou. You should see my dress! Do come, Guardian: I have not the time to tell you more about it, but do come. Seriously, we can't do without you. By the way, do you know that I said "*I shall*" to my mother this morning, but it did not

come off very well, for I think she saw that I was trembling all over as I said it. But I will tell you all about it.

Another letter to and from the same persons

My Guardian, my dear Guardian,—Oh God, my husband is vexed with me! It is useless for me to go over it in my mind. I am not in the wrong, at least I do not think I am. My mother, who is always against my husband, is on his side in this matter. Oh, it is beyond me. I long to tell you all about it, but as you must judge between us that would be like trying to get you on my side first. No, no, dear Guardian, I only want you to reconcile us. I am willing that you should say that I was in fault, if I was, but only a little in fault, for if you wholly condemn me, my husband, next time, may not listen to me at all. You know that for a fortnight now he has had supper very often in town, but what you did not know was that he comes home so late that he dares not spend the rest of the night in my room, but retires to his little room. As it is next to mine, and as I cannot get to sleep till I have heard him come in, I cannot be mistaken on this point. Up to now I did not dare complain seriously to him about it, although I have felt very worried.

On Sunday morning, hearing a sound in his room, I thought he might be unwell: that was enough to make me go to him. I found him suffering from severe indigestion. I stayed the rest of the night with him, and at four o'clock sent for the doctor, who prescribed some remedies which gave him relief. He then slept for some hours. When he woke, I asked him gently where he had had supper the evening before. "With the Chevalier de Canaples. Why?" he said.

"Because I feel like hating anyone who upsets your health."

He smiled and thanked me. This Chevalier, Guardian, is the one who accompanied Madame de Maupeou to our ball and who was so attentive to me. This encouraged me to say that I was afraid that though he was grateful for my concern for his health, he was not equally careful to preserve that health, which was rather inconsistent.

"How so?" he asked.

"Because you have kept such late hours for some time past," I told him.

"How do you know? Have you been spying on me? I can tell you that that won't suit me at all."

"Is it spying," I returned, "to wait for you in vain every night till past 1 o'clock in the morning?"

"You've timed all this fault-finding, that I certainly don't deserve, very nicely," said M. d'Epinay. "I overlook it for this once, but I'll ask you to drop this sort of tone. I choose to be free, and I don't care to be questioned." M. l'Abbé de Givry and M. de Rinville came in as he said this: I greeted them, and then retired to my own room, humiliated and miserable, and all through my husband. At six o'clock I heard that he had ordered the carriage, although the doctor had forbidden him to go out. I thought he was coming to see me. Nothing of the kind. The gentlemen were wishing to take their leave, but he kept them. Then I despaired of seeing, or at any rate of having a word with him. I wondered if I ought to lock my door in case he brought them up with him. Oh, Guardian, when I heard the carriage going away I thought I should faint. I was beside myself. At eight o'clock I pulled myself together to go downstairs to my father-in-law's apartment. I felt sure my husband would soon be back. I would rather have waited for him in my own room, but I was afraid that if we met there that I should not have been fit to go downstairs afterwards. The explanation between us

was bound to be very long, and possibly too sharp, for I dared not expect it to be on the tender side. I was very much hurt, there's no getting away from that. On the other hand, it puzzled me to know what tone to take with him. My husband had called me a child. I knew that I was right in the main, but I feared that I had bungled a bit. If my mother was going to take his side—I went on to tell myself—(which is just what she has done) I shall be put in the wrong without ever getting a hearing. However, it is I who am the offended party. I shall never be able to conceal my feelings. All the same, I went downstairs. My brother-in-law, de Jully,[1] saw that I had been crying: at first he was inclined to tease me, but I begged him in a low voice not to draw attention to me. He took pity on me and pressed my hand as if to say that he sympathised. At nine o'clock, still no M. d'Epinay: at a quarter past nine they waited no longer for him, and sat down to table. An instant after, I got a message from him to say that M. de Rinville had taken him home with him and that he was staying for supper. Then it was, dear Guardian, that I had the greatest difficulty in controlling myself. I was worried above all about his being unwell. Still, when I saw how cross his father was with him on account of his very dissipated ways during the past fortnight, I tried to stand up for him.

As soon as they rose from table I asked leave to retire, excusing myself on account of the bad night I had had, and I went to my room and there burst into tears. My brother-in-law, concerned because he had noticed that there was something the matter with

[1] M. de Bellegarde had two daughters: the eldest Marie Françoise Thérèse (Mme Pinceau de Luce); the younger Elizabeth-Sophie-Françoise (Mimi) (the charming Mme d'Houdetot); and three sons: M. La Live d'Epinay, M. La Live de Jully, M. La Live de la Briche.

me, came after me and urged me to tell him what the trouble was. He was so insistent that I had to tell him. I told him everything. He blamed his brother greatly. Good God, as if that was the way to console me! But he said that I was merely making rather too much of a bit of dissipation. "Point out to your husband where he's wrong," said he to me, "but however he takes what you say, don't be fool enough to upset yourself over it." What advice! Heavens, am I the only person in the world who knows what it is to be in love? He added, seeing that his consolation was only aggravating my grief . . . shall I repeat to you, Guardian, what he said to me? If you knew the impression! Still, what does it signify coming from the lips of a man who knows nothing of love. He said to me when he saw . . . but, Guardian, if he really meant what he said, he must . . . I don't know what I was going to say. But never remind me of it—I don't want to remember it! I want to forget it: I think if what he said remained in my memory I should hate my brother. He said to me: "What's the good, my poor sister, of getting yourself into this state? Now, supposing the worst comes to the worst—that he does take a mistress—a passing fancy—what of it? Will he love you less at bottom?"

"What are you saying, brother," I cried, "that he does take . . .?"

"I don't know, I am only supposing. I have seen him once or twice."

"No, no, brother—stop."

"But, once more, what of it?"

"No, no, brother, it's not possible."

"All right," he said.

For a quarter of an hour I struggled between a desire and fear of finding out all he knew. Fear gained the day, and pretending that I must lie down, I begged him to leave me by myself. I can't tell you

the state I was in: it seemed that everything conspired to increase the turmoil in my heart. But let me conclude my sad story. I waited for my husband until eleven o'clock: then, either from mental prostration or utter fatigue, I fell asleep in my armchair. At three o'clock I woke, never doubting that he had come in, and not being able to enlighten myself on this point, I rang for my maid to undress me. But no sooner was I in bed than I felt far too agitated to sleep. I would have given anything in the world to know if my husband had come home. The violent headache that I had in addition to my agitation proved to me that I was feverish. I consulted my watch after a while: it was four o'clock. A moment after I heard the sound of a carriage stopping at the door of the house; the flutter I was in told me that it was my husband, and the noise that I immediately heard in his room confirmed the fact of his arrival. Then, dear Guardian, I could no longer restrain myself. I threw myself out of bed with the intention of going to him and loading him with reproaches, but I stopped myself just as I was going to open my door and go to him, as it struck me if I angered him he might not be able to get to sleep, and so be made more unwell than he was already. So I went back, but was no sooner in my own room than I regretted not having done as I intended; I relit the fire and spent the rest of the night in going to bed and getting up again.

Next morning I waited impatiently until it was time to go to his room: I usually went to see him every morning, but, on thinking it over, thought it best to wait for him so as to let him see that I was offended. At last at eleven o'clock I had word of him. He sent to know if he could see me. This ceremony, for which I was unprepared, struck me as odd and upset me a good deal. I was the more astonished when I saw him coming in laughing, looking like a

man sure of his welcome. "How is my little wife?" said he, taking my head in his hands to kiss me. "Ill," I answered shortly, drawing away from him. He, looking surprised, but still holding me, said: "What is the matter? Have I done anything to you?" I made no reply, I turned my back on him, and walked about trying to pull myself together. This beginning, so utterly unexpected, left me speechless. He followed me, saying, "May I not be informed of the meaning of this manner and this silence? For the first time I appear to be unwelcome," he added. "Everything has its beginning. I will go, Madame: you will let me know when you feel inclined to share your troubles with your husband." I must say, dear Guardian, when he said that I began to fear that I had exaggerated his misdeeds. At any rate, I felt that they were of the sort that are more readily felt than set down in black and white, for though I wanted to open my mouth, yet the facts, serious as I still consider them, seemed rather too petty to put into words. However, seeing him going off so assured, I took courage from the hope that his behaviour was nothing more than flightiness and that, thinking nothing of it himself, my words had brought no blush to his cheek.

As he was shutting the door, I ran to him with open arms, and burst into tears. "Monsieur, Monsieur," I cried, "your behaviour! your being unwell! Comfort me—tell me, you do love me!" I could say no more. Tears choked me. He returned, took me on his knee, kissed me, laughing, and said, "Oh, I thought that was it!" I must say, Guardian, that his reply did put me out. I tore myself from his arms and ran to the end of the room. "What! You thought it was that! You left me in grief, and you thought it was that! You have a heart of stone—yes—you have—I don't want to hear of you again." He came up to me and really did try to patch up what he

had said, but I would not listen to him. He promptly left me. But what do you think he did, Guardian? He went to my mother and complained bitterly to her of my temper, and said I must be ill, and was hysterical, and no one could stand it, and that I had flown into a rage for no reason, and had been quite rude to him, and said I wanted to hear no more of him. I was very astonished to see my mother entering my room, and she treated me as if I were a child, and accused me of pride and a most unbecoming haughtiness. I told her all my grievances, and she said that M. d'Epinay should have behaved with more delicacy, but all the same she blamed me for making a mountain out of a molehill, and above all considered that I had lost my temper most improperly. She made out that my father-in-law must on no account know anything of the scene, and that my husband must be recalled without a moment's delay. She declared that he was offended and upset. I could not bear the thought: and indeed I really did think that I must be in the wrong, though a certain misgiving still whispered the contrary, but I would not heed it, thinking it was only due to my wounded pride, because of the things M. de Jully had said—which I must not believe—at least I hope not. My husband was summoned and came to receive—for indeed it looked like it—my apologies. I made none: I only said, "If in my excessive grief, Monsieur, I came to behave to you in a manner not in accordance with the feelings of my heart, you have no one to thank but yourself. Look into my heart and judge of us both." He made no reply, kissed me tenderly, or so my mother said, and observed, "Come, my dear, we will forget all about it, let's say no more on the subject." My mother kissed us both and rose to go. "That's right," said she, "now get yourselves ready, and come to dinner, and don't let M. de Bellegarde see anything: you're

just a couple of children." My husband as he conducted my mother from the room told me that he was going to dress and would see me later. This makeshift reconciliation did not comfort me at all. I was sadder than ever, if possible. All I had done and thought seemed to me to have been foolish and muddling, and in short, dear Guardian, I own I came to the conclusion that I had acted childishly, not in being upset, but in behaving as I did.

In all these sad reflections I had only tears for consolation. As I was not fit to be seen, and was also feeling quite ill, I decided to go to bed. After dinner my husband came and sat with me for an hour, and as he knew he was not going to be called to any further account he could safely have tried to make up to me a little. But he seemed to expect me to make the first advances. His mind was elsewhere! I naturally felt some resentment, and it was all I could do not to be angry, and to give him an occasional smile, always with tears in my eyes. However, he came and kissed me, but I was not the happier for it. I do not think it is possible to go straight from the deepest grief to peace of mind, or still more, to that satisfaction which is happiness. And then there was that remark of my brother-in-law's that I wished I could forget. Finally M. d'Epinay went away about four o'clock. Then, having spent the whole afternoon by myself, I became fairly calm by evening. I ended by making up my mind to forget what had happened and to follow whatever lead my husband gave me. But now, dear Guardian, do come, and come quickly. I cannot live like this any longer. I still have a thousand things to tell you. But my pen tumbles from my fingers. Come, I conjure you.

I hastened to reply to Madame d'Epinay and did my best to comfort her, and to that end said nothing of her husband's shortcomings. I blamed her, on the

contrary, for having, in a way, tried to drag a confession out of him instead of appearing satisfied with the tokens of affection and regret that he had shown her.

I need hardly say that I did not enlighten her as to all I knew. They had only been married three months, yet from more than one source I learnt that he was running after a girl at the " Comedie ", to whom he had offered considerable inducements. I had spoken to him about it a fortnight before and had told him to have some self-respect. He denied the facts of which I had been informed, and made great protestation about the regularity of his conduct, making out that he was offended by my suspicions. I on my side pretended to believe him. Unfortunately, he was afterwards only too regularly irregular, and whenever he made one of the improper and unfair scenes, that he used sometimes to have with his wife, it was always a sure and certain sign that he was scared of the disclosure of some new and glaring wild oats. When Madame d'Epinay begged me to speak to her husband I addressed him more severely, and gave him chapter and verse that he could not deny. He admitted it, but mixed up so many base and false statements in his admission that from that time onwards I had no hope of him whatever. I got Madame d'Epinay to promise to be patient and forbearing, and urged Madame d'Esclavelles to try and look at things from her daughter's point of view a little more. I made her see as far as was in my power how trying the perpetual sight of a dismal and forbidding countenance may be, and that, as a matter of fact, her dreary discourse and many lectures were losing her my ward's affection and confidence. My exhortation only had the effect of making Madame d'Esclavelles pursue a disjointed line of conduct, sometimes according to the impulse of her own temperament or principles,

and sometimes according to my advice, which was chiefly when she saw the ill success of her own methods.

Madame d'Epinay's married unhappiness had begun. Her husband, whose business took him away from home, was fast, and lived extravagantly, and contracted debts. The family meanwhile went to live at M. de Bellegarde's property at Epinay (Epinay-lez-Saint-Denis), and M. d'Epinay wrote to his wife:

"I am delighted that you are going to settle at Epinay, and more pleased still that you seem to have taken such a liking to the place: but you will need society and amusement. I hope my father will consent to have some entertainment. You have your carriage and you can have the use of his as well. The country has nothing to offer when one is there all by oneself, seeing the same things for ever. One must provide oneself with some variety, and I want you to tell me all about your pleasures and all you do at Epinay."

Madame d'Epinay resolved to lead a very quiet life and not to play cards nor spend money unnecessarily. Her idea was to occupy herself with reading and drawing. M. de Bellegarde's younger daughter, Mimi, was at Epinay with the rest of the family. Madame d'Epinay bade farewell to her friends in Paris, one of whom, her lively cousin, Madame de Maupeou, laughed at her, saying:

"You are very silly: did you marry a wealthy man in order to live in poverty? What's the good of this song about our being well off if we let ourselves go without the simple necessities? Our husbands have got to pay our debts, and all that decency demands of us is to refrain from running up bills that are needless or too extravagant. In your place, I should deny myself no expenditure proper to my position."

To Madame d'Epinay, replying that in so doing her debts would be bound to come to the knowledge of her father-in-law, who would think she had the same gift for making money fly as her husband had, her cousin retorted, " Very well, stick in poverty, but do at least have some fun, and don't bury yourself alive."

CHAPTER II

1746

Letter from Madame de Maupeou to Madame d'Epinay

For a week now, most dear and much-to-be-pitied cousin, have I kept my room and have tried by every inducement to get you to come and see me, but without success. By the way, I was frantically amused with the excuse you sent yesterday for not coming to my concert. "There were too many people!" What a poor excuse! So, because your husband is away, you must live in retirement—you, who a month ago seemed to be tied to the sail of a windmill, have immersed yourself in this most deplorable solitude: and why? for a husband who has to scour the country, and who must be away some months. You had better look out, I assure you, for you will make yourself perfectly ridiculous.

Of course it's all right to be fond of one's husband: that is most admirable, but there are limits to all things. I can just imagine how satisfactory this new style of life of yours must be to your dear relations who now have someone else to gaze at them gaping—which is something when gaping is chronic! But joking apart—do consider what you're coming to.

What with your present condition and the life you lead you will get melancholy and depressed, which will not add to your attractions. Those fine eyes of yours will become dim, those pretty fresh cheeks will fade, and your husband when he returns will be so pleased with this reformation! I also foresee another little difficulty which seems to me worth mentioning, and

this is that you will no longer suit the flighty style of the charming creature (pardon the remark), and this is highly likely to produce very disastrous results for one or the other of you, or else you will be wanting to live his life again, and will have got out of the way of it, and moreover, people will say you are a silly woman who does not know her own mind.

Don't you see, my pretty cousin? Profit by all this, and come and see me. Good-bye.

Madame d'Epinay's depression was due to her condition (she was pregnant and thought she might die) and was aggravated by fretting over her husband, whose infidelities continued. Her guardian told her that they were mostly careless, frivolous women who died in childbirth, and that ladies who took proper care of themselves and led the sort of life she was leading did not, as a rule, die. He persuaded her to take a calmer view of things, suggesting that she should try and render herself fit to suckle her child. She caught eagerly at the notion. "That will be a great pleasure to look forward to," she said. But she was afraid to mention the idea, herself, to either her father-in-law or her mother, seeing that such a thing was never done by mothers in her station of life, at that time. She asked her guardian to broach the subject to her parents.

M. de Bellegarde said he would raise no objection provided the doctor approved and her husband was willing. As for her mother, there was no end to the alarm the notion evoked in her—it would be so peculiar—her daughter would look ridiculous if, after all, she was unable to feed the child—it might be bad for her health—etc. etc. Still, she yielded to M. de Lisieux when he impressed upon her the importance of yielding to Emilie in the matter. However, Madame d'Epinay was thwarted by her husband, who would not countenance any departure from the conventional motherhood of the period.

In Paris, after the birth of her son, Madame d'Epinay went into society with her husband who was at home for a time. She made the acquaintance of Madame Darty, the mistress of the Prince de Conti, a charming woman, of whom Madame d'Epinay says that "she has a curious face that for a long time set me against her." She also made the acquaintance of M. de

Francueil. At the suggestion of M. de Lisieux she began to keep a diary, which "will be," said he to her, "a mirror in which to behold yourself as you have been and as you will be."

The Diary, 1747–1749

2nd March

M. d'Epinay introduced me to-day to Mlle d'Ette who is coming to live in Paris. He got to know her during his last tour: she was living with an uncle whom she looked after. She lives at "Les Filles de-Saint Thomas". I like the look of her, she must have been very pretty. She is thirty-three, tall, has a good figure, she seems intelligent and refined. Her manner is hesitating and I think she is shy. I spent an hour with her and propose to cultivate her acquaintance. I took quite a fancy to her.

8th March, 1748

I have never gone out so much as I have done during the last month and I am none the happier for it: on the contrary when I am alone, I am bored and I cry. No one comes to visit me, because they never find me in. It is to please M. d'Epinay that I started going out like this: now I do it because I must. I can't bear being alone any longer, and I cannot think of my husband, for his behaviour wrings my heart. I have heard some whispers of a Mlle Rose, a dancer at the Comedie, whom he is running after. I have tried not to believe it, for it is such a grief to me to think him guilty.

Mimi is to be married. It is all settled: she is to marry M. le Comte d'Houdetot, a young man of quality, but without any fortune. He is twenty-two, a professional gambler, ugly as the devil, not very high up in the Army, and to put it shortly, a nobody and from all appearances cut out to be a nobody. But all the circumstances of the affair are too strange and too utterly past belief not to be recorded in this

diary. I should not be able to help laughing were I not afraid that the upshot of the ridiculous business will be that my poor Mimi will be miserable. Hers is such a beautiful, frank, upright, sensitive soul! Still I take comfort from this, for only a monster could treat her badly.

Yesterday, Wednesday, morning my mother called me into her room, and said: "M. de Rinville, senior, has just proposed to M. de Bellegarde that Mimi should marry one of his great grandsons, who is said to be a very good fellow." "But your father," said she, "is particularly anxious that the young man should be to his daughter's liking, so we are going to-day to dine at Madame de Rinville's, and M. d'Houdetot will be there too, but, at the same time, nothing at all is to be mentioned. He did not wish to tell his daughter anything, but, as she never pays attention to anyone unless she has some reason for doing so, she is quite likely not to notice Count d'Houdetot, if she has not been cautioned beforehand. So I have persuaded M. de Bellegarde to say a word to her about it. Nothing further has been arranged so far, and we shall have to have fuller particulars, although what we have heard of the Count so far is all to the good: later the 'dot' will have to be discussed."

To cut this extraordinary story short, I must tell you that we went to dinner with Madame de Rinville. When we got there, we saw a regular family party—M. and Madame d'Houdetot, their son and every possible Rinville. The Marquise d'Houdetot, when we entered, rose hastily, and came with open arms to embrace my father-in-law, my mother, Mimi and myself, whom she had never seen before. After this embrace, old M. Rinville took my father-in-law by the hand and formally introduced him to Madame d'Houdetot, who in her turn introduced her son and her husband, and then we were all introduced over

again and embraced. The Marquise is of medium height: she looked fifty at least: she has a very lovely skin, though she is very thin and very pale. She has bright keen eyes. All her movements are hasty and violent, yet for all her flurry she is plainly a most purposeful person. Her conversation is mainly gestures, and her eyes rove round partly from curiosity, partly from vanity. Her husband is perhaps some twenty years older than she. He is an old army man and in figure and style resembles the King of Spades. He has a way of sitting down with his head and his hands propped up on his stick which really, I must say, gives him a most meditative, thoughtful look. He repeats the last words of whatever his wife says, and he grins and exhibits teeth that would be better concealed.

Madame d'Houdetot made my sister sit beside her, questioned her, interrupted her, complimented her, and in less than two minutes was charmed with her attractiveness and intelligence. The young people were placed side by side at table. M. de Rinville and Madame la Marquise d'Houdetot pounced on my father-in-law, and my mother was placed between my sister-in-law, from whom she did not want to be separated, and the Marquis d'Houdetot. By dessert they had already begun to talk openly of the match, in spite of our having been told that the subject was not to be mentioned. When we returned to the drawing-room after the coffee, when the servants had left the room, M. de Rinville, addressing my father-in-law, suddenly came out with: "Now, my friends, here we all are, a family party: good straight friends like ourselves need not be so guarded: so let us speak out. Either it's yes or it's no. Does my son suit you? Yes or no. Does he suit your daughter? Yes, or no likewise: that's the important point. I regard you children as my own, my friends. So I

say: Madame la Marquise (turning towards her) likes your daughter, my dear friend, very much: I can see that. Our young Count is already in love:[1] your daughter has only to make up her mind whether she likes him or not. Let her speak: say the word, my god-daughter." My sister blushed. They overwhelmed her with compliments and made a fuss over her father, and in fact did all possible to bewilder us and give us no time to think.

My mother, who saw that my father-in-law's blind confidence in M. de Rinville would make him agree to anything, interrupted the hubbub of applause and said to Madame de Rinville, loud enough to be heard, "It seems to me, Madame, that M. de Rinville is going a little too fast: matters are not sufficiently advanced for our young folk to be asked to make a definite statement. Supposing that on the strength of this idea of being married they should take a fancy to one another, and then the affair came to nothing!"

"Aha! very right," cried M. de Rinville, lifting his hands and clapping them together, "bravo, prudent counsellors!" he went on, twisting my mother's remark to fit in with his own idea. "We must deal with the settlements first, and meanwhile the young folk can chat with one another: you're quite right, quite right." Then promptly taking the old Marquis and his wife by the hand he set them beside my father-in-law and my mother, and as he did so he screwed his head round to look at us, calling out, laughing, "My children, amuse yourselves, play together: we are going to consider ways and means of making you happy very soon."

When they were all seated, M. de Rinville announced that the Marquis d'Houdetot was giving, as marriage portion to his son, the Count, a round eighteen thousand pounds from estates in Normandy, and

[1] He was, but with another lady.

the Cavalry commission that he had bought him the year before. The Marquis, leaning on his stick, as I have described before, agreed to it all, and the Marquise's eyes devoured my father-in-law and my mother: "I, myself," said she, "know nothing about business: I give all I have to give—my diamonds are my principal gift, Monsieur, my diamonds, they are lovely: I do not know just exactly how many I have, but all I have I give to my daughter-in-law, not to my son."

"There's a present, and a generous one, indeed, my dear friend," said M. de Rinville emphatically to M. de Bellegarde, and he then asked if he were satisfied with what was proposed. My father-in-law said that he was satisfied, but that his daughter's happiness was his main object.

There was an interruption here for a concert of praise of the young Count, and M. de Rinville answered for his god-daughter as for himself. Then M. de Bellegarde said that he should treat his daughter as he had his other children, and give her three hundred pounds down as dot, and her share of his property after his death. "Ah," said M. de Rinville, getting up, "now we're all agreed, so I'll ask you to sign the contract this evening: we will publish the banns on Sunday: we will get a special license and the marriage will take place on Monday."

All the Houdetot family and their agents were of this mind, but my mother opposed the idea strongly, and so did M. de Bellegarde, who had not yet approached his family, and who, besides, wished some of them to witness the contract. My mother also added that there would be no time for any preparations, and that this haste would leave the young folk no time to get to know one another, or to find out if they were suited to one another. M. de Rinville applied himself to disposing of the first objection, but kept quiet about the other, knowing very well that

there was no answer to it. "You will let yourself in for a whole lot of fuss if you hang the business out—it cannot be kept dark. And then you know how undecided your brother is, he won't give you a minute's peace. See, we have still time to go round to the lawyer's and show him the draft contract. Whilst he is drawing it up we will send your family word of the marriage and will all go round to your house and sign the contract. As for making preparations for the wedding, there's no need of that: let's have no fuss and no display, and so save expense."

You know M. de Bellegarde well enough, my dear guardian, to realise how easily he tumbled to all these bad suggestions: they appealed too much to his love of peace and quiet not to catch him. My mother, however, drew him aside urging him to wait a bit, but all she got from him was, "Eh, sister—just like you! anyone would think that M. de Rinville was trying to do me. No, no, I should be ashamed to hesitate for a moment to do as he suggests." My good father's eyes beamed with joy and he went out, a moment afterwards, with M. de Rinville to carry out the arrangement.

Now I proceed to the moment when we were all assembled for the signing of the contract. Nothing was more comic than the look of utter astonishment on all the faces of the various members of the two families who were all but strangers to one another. They were all so reserved, doubtful and uncomfortable that they looked quite stupid. While the contract was being read out, the Marquise produced two jewel cases of diamonds, which she handed her daughter-in-law for a wedding present. A space was left in the contract for the insertion of their value as there had not been time to estimate it. We all signed, and then we sat down to table, and the wedding-day was fixed for Monday.

Madame d'Arty came to see me this morning. She told me that the Marquise d'Houdetot is a professional gambler, and so is her son, the Count, and that their house is thoroughly Bohemian. Anyway, she said enough to make me very afraid that Mimi will not be happy. I had the courage to say as much to my father-in-law, but he made me tell him who my informant was, and all he said was, "Women's gossip!" This wedding will prevent me seeing Mlle d'Ette as often as I should like for some time, but I shall make up for it later on: fortunately my people like her very much.

7th May, 1748

Yesterday the wedding took place: this morning I was with the bride while she was dressing: she was very sad, and had been crying a lot. She begged me to come and see her every day, and I shall not fail to do so: I know how she will need me with her during the early days of marriage, above all a marriage such as hers.

7th June, 1748

My husband has just started on his circuit. I do not mind saying that far from being depressed as formerly, I am pleased in a way that he has gone. I am going this evening to Epinay and shall be there by myself for some days: I shall there peacefully regain the tranquillity that I have lost since I discovered the true state of my feelings. I find myself half ashamed of being happy because my husband is away. Up to now, when he went away, I sought friends and asked them to console me. To-day I flee from them, and am afraid lest they should notice that I no longer need them. No one has taken his place in my heart and no one ever shall. My indifference towards him is only what he has wanted apparently, judging from his behaviour towards me. I have

neglected no means of drawing him back to me: it has cost me many tears to come to feel like this. Why, then, by worrying, spoil the first gleam of peace that comes my way?

I have my son with me. The little creature keeps me busy from morning till night. He is like, and yet not like, his father. He has his face; he has also a little smile that is rather touching, and a craze, really a perfect craze for having me with him always. He cries directly I leave him. He stands in awe of me already, and I am not sorry for that, for I do not want to spoil him. Sometimes, when he smiles to see me and claps his little hands to show how pleased he is, I feel that there is no joy like that of making a fellow-creature happy.

8th September, 1748

Here's three months gone by, and not an entry in my diary, more because I have felt apathetic and uninterested in myself than from lack of things to note. I really will in future make myself keep my diary strictly.

Mademoiselle d'Ette came to spend the day with me. After dinner I lay down in my long chair. I was feeling heavy and dull: I yawned every minute, and thinking that she might think I found her boring or tiresome, I pretended that I was sleepy, hoping that I should presently get over my mood. But, no—I only got worse, depression got the better of me, and I felt I must say how low I was feeling. Tears came to my eyes, I could not help myself.

"I beg your pardon," I said, "I think I am hysterical. I am feeling very unwell."

"Don't distress yourself," said she. "Yes, you are undoubtedly hysterical, and not to-day for the first time: but I have refrained from mentioning it for fear of making you worse."

After a little talk about hysteria and its effect,

"Come," said she, "what about the cause of yours. Look here, be frank, and don't hide anything from me: you're bored, that's the only cause."

"I should certainly think so," said I, "if I had only felt like this during my confinement, or after I left the country for my confinement. Loneliness when I was cut off from my friends, and being unable to do anything, might well have made me feel dull and caused this depression that weighs on me; but it was just the same at Epinay, and even when you were staying with us. The very times when I seemed to enjoy your conversation most were sometimes those . . ."

"Yes," she interrupted, "when you were most down. All this confirms what I am saying, for I suspect that you are suffering from boredom of heart and not boredom of mind."

Seeing that I did not reply, she went on, "Yes, your heart is lonely: it has nothing now to care for: you no longer love your husband, and you cannot love him."

I tried to make a sign of denial, but she proceeded in a tone that impressed me.

"Yes, you could not love him, for you no longer respect him."

I felt relieved when she said the word I dared not utter. I burst into tears.

"Have a good cry," said she, holding me close in her arms: "just tell me all that is in that pretty head of yours. I am your friend, and I shall be your friend always. Don't hide your heart's secrets from me, and let me have the happiness of comforting you. But above all tell me what is in your mind, and your own idea of your position."

"Alas," I said, "I don't know what I think. For some time past I have thought that I was growing indifferent to M. d'Epinay, and his conduct permits

me to say that I no longer love him. I have almost forgotten him, yet when I do think of him, I always cry. If you can tell me how I am to get myself out of my present fix, do tell me: I place myself unreservedly in your hands. But one of the most curious contradictions in myself is that I dread his return, and that sometimes I even feel such a horror of seeing him again that it seems as if it couldn't be worse if I hated him."

"Ah, yes," answered Mlle d'Ette, laughing, "one only hates while one loves. Your hate is only love, love humiliated and sore: you will never cure yourself of this fatal malady except by falling in love with someone else more worthy of you."

"Never! Never!" I cried, releasing myself from her arms as if I feared to see her statement take shape in fact. "I shall never love anyone except M. d'Epinay."

"You will love others," said she, still holding me, "and a good thing too: only, see that you find someone sufficiently pleasant to make you happy."

"And that," said I, "is precisely what I shall never find. I swear to you, in all sincerity, that since I have mixed in society I never saw a man, except my husband, who seemed worth noticing."

"I can well believe it," said she. "You've known no men except old drivellers or young dudes: not very surprising that they did not attract you. Of all the men who visit you I don't know one fit to make a sensible woman happy. What I want for you is a man with brains, about thirty: a man who could advise you, guide you, and who was sufficiently fond of you to have but one desire and that to make you happy."

"Yes," I answered, "that would be delightful; but where is one to find a clever, nice man such as you describe, willing to devote himself to one, and

be content to be a friend without wanting to be a lover."

"But that's not what I'm saying at all," said Mlle d'Ette, "my deliberate suggestion is that he should be your lover."

My first feeling was one of shock: my second, relief that such a nice girl as Mlle d'Ette is considered should see no harm in one's having a lover, not that I felt disposed to take her advice, far from it: but I need, at any rate, keep up no pretence before her of being distressed over my husband's neglect, for up to then I was afraid that people might think it wrong in me not to be more upset on account of it. I am sure that my mother was afraid of this, not that she said so openly.

"Oh, I shall never have a lover," I told her.

"And why not?" said she. "Religious scruples?"

"No," I answered, "but I don't think a husband's misconduct authorises a wife to misbehave herself."

"What do you call misbehaviour?" said she. "I don't suggest that you should advertise the fact that you have a lover, nor that you should have him always around: on the contrary he must be the man with whom you are least seen in public. I don't suggest meetings, whisperings, letters, notes, or any stuff of that sort, which afford but a passing pleasure, and lay one open to a thousand and one unpleasantnesses."

"How nice!" said I. "You propose a lover whom one never sees and with whom one has nothing to do."

"Not at all," said she, "I suggest a lover of whom people can say nothing one way or another."

"Ah, you agree then," I told her, "that in spite of all precautions, people would talk, and there I should be with my reputation gone!"

"What makes you think so? First and foremost where is the woman who is not talked about? What have you gained by not having a lover? Haven't

people coupled your name with that of the Chevalier de Canaples?"

"Goodness!" I cried, "the Chevalier de Canaples! They think that!"

"Poor child," she returned, "you get surprised and shocked over everything. But in this world folk say just what comes into their heads and believe every word, or not a word, of all they happen to hear. Who bothers to verify a yarn that's floating round? Besides it's only by chopping and changing one's lovers, or making an unfortunate choice, or, as I have already said, by advertising the fact that one has a lover, that a woman loses her good name. The essential thing is to make a right choice: people may talk about it for a week or indeed may not talk about it at all, and then they will say no more about you, except to say well of you."

"I don't take to these morals," I said. "There are three points here which beat me. The first is, how to have a lover, unashamed, since the liaison entails a perpetual traffic in deceit: the second, how to have a lover and keep him in the dark: and the third, how to endure the looks of those who know or guess."

Mlle d'Ette thought for a moment: after a bit she said, "I know how straight and discreet you are: tell me, frankly, what do people say of me?"

"The very best," I told her, "and what they would never say if you practised what you have just preached to me."

"I was waiting for that," said she. "Ten years ago, I lost my mother. I was seduced by the Chevalier de Valory, who had known me from childhood: owing to my extreme youth and my trust in him I did not at first see what he was after. It was some time before I realised, and when I did I had become so fond of him that I could not resist him. I had some scruples: he disposed of them by promising to marry

me. He tried to, as a matter of fact, but when I saw how opposed his family were on account of the great disparity in our ages, and my being so badly off, and as I was also very happy as I was, I was the first to stifle my scruples, the more readily, as he was poor too. He thought it over: I suggested that we should go on living as we were. He agreed: I left the country and followed him to Paris. You know how I live here. Four times a week he spends the day with me: other times we content ourselves with hearing from one another, unless we happen to meet by chance. We live happily and are contented: perhaps we should not be so happy if we were married."

"I don't know where I am," I interrupted. "All you say bewilders me and I feel I must allow myself a little time to take it in."

"Not as long as you think," she said. "I promise you that very soon you will find my code of morals quite simple, and you are cut out for it."

"I am not likely to require it," I replied, "I am not in the least in love, fortunately, and were I, should I be likely to be happy for a moment, by stifling my conscience? Worry, constraint and shame would poison a feeling that is only delightful when it can be freely indulged in."

After this conversation, Mlle d'Ette and I went out to do some shopping. We met M. de Francueil, who told me that he had called on me some seven or eight times without finding me at home. One of these days, when I am not going out, I shall let him know. He is accomplished and musical, and his company was a great pleasure to me when I was laid up after my confinement: possibly it may be so again.

28th February, 1749

Madame la Countess d'Houdetot introduced me to M. Gauffecourt to-day. I know him by reputation

and I saw him when I was a child. He is a very clever man, very pleasant, and very full of fun, although he is now middle-aged. I see that if I stay at home sometimes I shall form an agreeable circle of friends.

M. de Francueil accepted the invitation I gave him: he came yesterday and spent the afternoon with me. I found him a pleasant man, much more so than I had thought at first. As no one else came, after we had talked for an hour, and as I could not find anything more to say, I suggested that we should have some music: so we spent the evening in that manner. I wanted him to stay to supper but he was engaged.

Epinay, 5th April

We have just come here for Easter. M. d'Epinay asked M. Francueil to come too and I was very pleased. M. Francueil has such polite easy manners, does everything so gracefully, and is so obliging and charming. His face attracts one straight away, and his conversation is so interesting that one cannot help taking to him. He gets on very well with M. de Bellegarde, but anyone would like him. He paints marvellously, is a fine musical composer and accomplished all round, and full of fun which is a joy to me. I must say that I have not had so pleasant a time for ever so long. M. d'Epinay leaves to-morrow on a new tour: he will be away six months at least.

M. Francueil proved only too delightful, and Madame d'Epinay falling in love, soon yielded to the passion she inspired. M. Francueil was a married man, but his wife, so Mlle d'Ette said, "had gone mad after her confinement and was in the country". Madame de Francueil as a matter of fact loved her husband, who did not reciprocate her affection.

Their amour was still young when Francueil fell ill, and to her horror Madame d'Epinay discovered that, all unwitting, she had transmitted to her lover an illness that her husband had passed on to her. Her grief was great. From Paris,

where she had rushed to her lover, she wrote frantic letters to her husband and parents, though, fortunately, as Mlle d'Ette observed, the latter were not sharp enough to see what was really the matter. Describing her friend's condition, Mlle d'Ette wrote to the Chevalier de Valory:

"Just as I was writing to you the old folk turned up: my word, they only missed Francueil by ten minutes. I don't know what they would have thought if they had seen him. For one moment I thought that all Madame d'Epinay's presence of mind would have deserted her at the sight of her parents. I found her throwing herself into the arms of her mother, who had assumed all the strength of mind her daughter had let go. She was in the greatest distress and furious with her son-in-law. She wanted to write to him: it would have been a letter! M. de Bellegarde held his daughter-in-law's hand and he and her mother petted her, and he said it was a good thing for his son that he had not known of his disgraceful conduct when this trouble first occurred. He hoped, he said, that it would be a lesson to him for life. Emilie who, so far, has always stood up for her husband, flared up at this notion of M. de Bellegarde's. 'I used to hope so too, father,' she said, 'but you won't have much hope when you hear this.' And without pausing to take breath she poured out the tale of M. d'Epinay's misdoings and bad principles. But I saw how she had lost her head, when in the midst of this fine disclosure, she let drop something of her own lapses: and indeed she all but let Francueil out of the bag.

I was dying of fright when I saw her on the verge of letting everything out. Still, indignation against d'Epinay was so strong that they would hardly have been likely to be hard on his wife's lapses, though they would have taken them seriously enough at any other time, I'm pretty sure. They pitied her and

petted her, but in spite of the fortunate fact that they were all on her side, she had not quite the nerve to mention the name of Francueil. I had to tell them the tale we had concocted beforehand.[1]

Madame de Roncherolles found out, I don't know how, that Madame d'Epinay was in Paris, and she sent this evening to say that she is coming to see her to-morrow. We have not let Madame de Maupeou know. It is certain that Emilie cannot have visitors in her present state: and what could one say in reply to the natural questions? Besides, her grief would give her away. You can come and see me, my Chevalier, in my room, to-morrow morning. Good morning, good night, my dear Chevalier. Until to-morrow.

P.S. By the way I was omitting to refer to the lecture implied in your letter. It was not meant to be taken seriously, I presume. Why is it that people are always hardest on, and most unfair to those in whom they are interested and of whom they are fond? If I did make inquiries as to the means and generosity of Emilie's visitors, I was not aware that I did so, and it is quite untrue to say that it is always my first thought. I don't know what has made you make this wonderful observation, but it has no point for it only proves, if there is any truth in it, how anxious I am to form a true estimate of persons who are thought a lot of, from whose grand reputation I always deduct half when they are rich and generous: that's my very own little touch-stone: do you see, Chevalier?"

It is quite clear that Madame d'Epinay, in disclosing her husband's conduct to her parents, was trying, probably without knowing it, to excuse her

[1] Namely that M. Francueil had been visiting them daily. Also that when he came to Epinay he had had a bad throat and had to stay in bed all day, but had left the same evening.

own weakness which she could really condone. But whereas Mademoiselle d'Ette argues that she was unbalanced, I consider that her behaviour points to candour and a sense of right, in fact nothing convinces more of Madame d'Epinay's straightforwardness. As for the Chevalier de Valory, I know him sufficiently intimately to say that one would do him an injustice if one were to base one's opinion of him on the flighty tone of Mlle d'Ette's confidences with regard to very serious subjects.

Madame d'Epinay stayed three weeks in Paris. Mlle d'Ette stayed with her. M. de Bellegarde and Madame d'Esclavelles returned to the country taking their grandson with them and came from time to time to see my ward. As she had sent me word that she was ill, I went to see her almost every day. The persons I met most frequently at her house were Madame de Roncherolles, Madame de Maupeou and M. de Gauffecourt. No one suspected the real cause of Madame d'Epinay's illness. After a week or ten days M. Francueil also came back to see her. I reproached my ward a little for her neglect of me, and she proferred some very feeble excuses in a voice as affectionate and friendly as ever. I soon saw how matters stood between her and M. de Francueil, and I must say that I thought it not a bad thing, for I know that he is considered a sensible man.

After a month they all returned to Epinay. My ward for all her happiness, had moments of profound melancholy, from which M. de Francueil himself could hardly rouse her. He had discovered the right way to the hearts of M. de Bellegarde and Madame d'Esclavelles and now, casting about for some means of diverting Emilie, he exaggerated her need of distraction and so persuaded M. de Bellegarde to have more company. M. de Bellegarde agreed, and as in the old days he had been very fond of a play, he had

a pretty theatre built in his château.[1] Emilie, who at heart was happy and wanted nothing more, was half unwilling to take part in this sort of amusement, but she was so encouraged by her success, that what she only did at first to oblige, eventually became a master passion with her. Because I reproached her for not writing to me she was glad to have her pastimes to write about, for she did not want to let me into her soul's secrets.

The Diary

I certainly had thought that I might have a fair talent for acting, they say so anyhow, but I think my parents, who nowadays do not often see good acting, but still have a liking for a pleasure they deny themselves, enjoy, for lack of the real thing, the poor imitations they can have to order. M. de Francueil, who has every possible social gift, is an extremely good actor. He has organised the company, and is Actor-Manager. Madame de Maupeou, Madame d'Houdetot, M. de Jully, and I are the caste so far, but we are expecting another recruit.

We started with *L'Engagement Temeraire*, a new play by M. Rousseau, a friend of Francueil's, who introduced him to us. The Author took one of the parts in the play. Although it is only a society comedy it was very successful. I doubt whether it would succeed on the stage, but it is the work of a very able man, perhaps an unusual man. I cannot tell, however, whether it is what I have seen of the man, or of the play that makes me think so. He pays compliments

[1] This theatre was erected in the Château of Chevrette and not in the Château of Epinay. At least, Rousseau never refers to any theatre at Epinay nor is it likely that two theatres would have been built in two properties so close together. La Chevrette was only a mile and a quarter down the road from Epinay, and stood in a pretty park. M. de Bellegarde bought the place at the same time that he bought Epinay.

ROUSSEAU

Engraved by David Martin; after the painting by Allan Ramsay (1766)
(National Gallery of Scotland, Edinburgh)

[*face p.* 56

without being polite, or without seeming so. He seems ignorant of the ways of society, but it is clear enough that he is exceedingly able. His complexion is dark, and his face is lit up by very burning eyes. When he talks, he appears good-looking. But when one recalls his face afterwards one thinks of him as plain. They say that he has bad health, and that he does not like to show when he is feeling ill, from some sort of vanity, and that is what makes him now and again seem shy. M. de Bellegarde, with whom he talked a long while this morning, is delighted with him, and has asked him to come and see us often. I am very glad of that. I think I shall learn a great deal from his conversation. But to return to our entertainments, they really are very agreeable. Our audience is made up largely of the working classes and servants. Président de Maupeou objects to his wife acting with us. The fact is she played a rather flighty part that she pounced on when the play was read, and she was very much the part, perhaps too much so.

Letter from Mlle d'Ette to the Chevalier de Valory

. . . You would have liked the play more than you could have imagined. Emilie and Madame de Maupeou have marked talent. There is something in Emilie's tone of voice, temperament, eyes, and smile that stirs one's soul, willy-nilly. The little Présidente is killingly racy and funny. The men are not as good, but they don't spoil the play.

We have had a brand new play and Francueil introduced the poor devil of an author to us: he is as poor as Job but has brains and vanity for four. Poverty compelled him to take the post of paid secretary to Francueil's mother-in-law. They say his antecedents are as queer as his appearance which is saying a lot. I hope we may hear what they were some day. Yester-

day little Maupeou and I declared that between us we two would solve the riddle. "In spite of his face," said she (for he really is ugly though Emilie thinks him nice-looking), "his eyes show that love has played a big part in his romance."

"No," said I, "his nose tells me that vanity has."

"Well—both."

We had got so far when Francueil came in and told us that he was a very remarkable man. I daresay it's true, but all the same . . . Certainly his play, though not specially good, is not the work of an ordinary person: the scenes are powerful and written with great feeling. All the comic passages are in bad taste, but the discussions and conversations, and the satire too, are excellent, though a trifle affected. Our Company will give it again, and then you will be able to judge of it better, or at any rate judge for yourself. M. de Bellegarde and Madame d'Esclavelles laughed till they cried: they have become ten years younger.

I must tell you by the way that the Countess d'Houdetot has become a very agreeable person. Her mind is formed: she is still a bit giddy, but she is so dead straight that a little flightiness rather adds to the charm of such a young woman as she is. We might (among ourselves) have thought her a trifle flirtatious, but Emilie says that she is nothing of the sort, and really I believe her. Francueil turns the heads of all these young women.

Emilie is not a bit jealous because she sees quite well that he has no eyes for anyone but her and laughs at the others. She is not the only one who sees that. I am afraid that their happiness won't last long for they parade it too openly. Madame de Maupeou has already passed a few remarks about them, but she is not the most dangerous. I suspect that Madame d'Esclavelles is not quite easy about her daughter and Francueil. She watches them a lot, and her reason

for not saying anything is fear of putting an idea into Emilie's head for which there is perhaps no foundation (that is, unless I'm greatly mistaken). She sometimes takes a rather serious tone with Francueil, but at such times she speaks more highly of him than ever to M. de Bellegarde. Altogether, I am afraid that a storm is brewing over poor Emilie's head. I am very sorry for it, for I shall not get off without a wetting myself, besides she really is a good little soul, and it would be a pity to make her unhappy. Do you know what she did a couple of days ago? M. de Bellegarde was suggesting to her that she should invest 20,000 pounds, coming to her in settlement of some agreement, in something which he considered good, and which would bring her in a net interest of 13 per cent a year. "You are master, father," she said to him, "anything you do will be right. But may I suggest one thing—that 10,000 pounds be assigned to me, and the other 10,000 to Mlle d'Ette as a loan from me, the arrangement being that I hold the capital but that she takes all the interest as long as the loan continues." M. de Bellegarde, touched by such generosity, agreed, and both insisted on my accepting their kindness, in spite of my refusal, and objections, and embarrassment. The deed was signed then and there. There, now, I've gone and told you all, and I didn't mean to. Curse my weakness! So it's worth while, isn't it, for me to keep in with these folk and please them for the time being.

Francueil leaves in a week's time. I do not know what we shall do with Emilie when he goes. . . .

The Diary

Francueil leaves to-morrow. I can hardly write, I am so dreadfully unhappy. He came for a minute to my room, for we dare not both be absent, at the

same time, from the drawing-room where they all are. He brought me a box for sweets, on which he had painted a picture of the scene in the play where he is on his knees before me. Although it is not really a portrait of us, the attitudes are so real, and the two people look so impassioned! Oh, they could only be us two!

But why did he not give me his own portrait?

Madame d'Epinay missed Francueil badly but found some comfort in M. Rousseau's society. She wrote to Francueil:

"You cannot imagine what a comfort he (Rousseau) is to me. He likes you: you like and have a high opinion of him. His company will help me to put up with this dull time. He seems to like being with me. I intend to make him say all over again all he has told me of you. . . . I have had a delightful conversation with M. Rousseau and was most touched by the simple original way in which he recounted his troubles to me. Three years ago he was forced to return to Paris, simply in order to put up with unjust treatment, and stand a good chance of being hanged there."

The next piece of news that she gave her lover was that their affair had been betrayed by someone to her husband, who, she said, had, in a letter, teased her about the use she made of her grass widowhood and reproached her for not writing to him, though he said he knew the reason of that, and saw with sorrow that his return would be a misfortune both for her and for him. Moreover, to her indignation, he bade her "hoodwink her dupes" while she could for they would not be taken in forever. He also told her that "late hours in secret" were bad for her health, and he hoped that in future she would not blame him if she was ill.

"Dupes" and "secret late nights"—poor Madame d'Epinay was most indignant.

In her diary (2nd Jan., 1750) she records the return of her husband, who now not only led a very fast life, but also

was ſtingy with money in her regard, not even allowing her sufficient for necessaries. He was, moreover, jealous and spying and made scenes.

Fortunately, however, his father's anger was thoroughly aroused after M. d'Epinay had created a scandal by inſiſting upon accompanying his miſtress, Mlle Rose, to the police station, when she was taken up for wearing men's apparel. Her guardian advised Madame d'Epinay not to seek a judicial separation from her husband but a separate income. This advice she followed: her husband was willing, and her father-in-law, realising the necessity for this arrangement, allowed her a separate income of her own.

CHAPTER III

1750

Constant ill-health and business matters have prevented me from getting on with my diary for a long time. I must start keeping it once more, and shall begin, my dear guardian, by telling you that M. de Bellegarde has at last given his consent to M. de Jully's marriage, in spite of the objections he at first raised against having one of the Chambons for a daughter-in-law. But his affection, or if you prefer to call it his weakness, where his children are concerned, is so great that he can never refuse any of them anything they want. Don't ask me for details of the wedding. The pair are happy and that is all there is to say about it. I only hope their present happiness may last, but I was just as happy once, and soon ceased to be so.

My husband leaves me alone more since we have made this arrangement, and I now really lead a life that suits me exactly. I could ask for nothing better, if I had not such wretched health. Francueil spends every other evening with me, which meets with approval. I have discouraged inconvenient visitors. My circle consists of Madame de Maupeou, my sisters-in-law, M. de Francueil, M. Rousseau, M. Gauffecourt, the Chevalier de Valory and Mlle d'Ette.

I must tell you, dear Guardian, that I begin to have great hopes of my son. The child learns easily, has a good memory, and shows judgment. He is tractable, too docile for his age. I am anxious to make a careful study of the defects and good points he evinces, and to devote my utmost care to the formation of his char-

acter. About a month ago my father-in-law talked of sending him to college. I made bold to object—but without avail. From that moment, I set myself to teach my son myself. I try above all to amuse him, and he really makes progress. I am hoping that if I continue to be so successful that they will let me go on teaching him. I love doing it. I divide my time between looking after my father and mother and attending to the children, for I have had my little girl with me since she had the smallpox. I devote my evenings to Francueil, either talking with him or writing to him on the days which he, on his side, gives up to his father.

Letter from Madame d'Epinay to M. le Marquis de Lisieux

Really I think I am pursued by some evil genius who is forever endeavouring to prevent me from getting the rest and comfort I need. My son is going to college. And why—do you suppose? Simply because a whole lot of events happened to coincide and they have spoiled my chance of successfully combating M. de Bellegarde's ideas with regard to school education. He is out of temper and has reason enough to be so, for Count d'Houdetot has declared flatly that he'll have no land except it's in Normandy.[1] M. de Bellegarde practically threw him out of his room. This scene has made my father-in-law difficult as you can well imagine, so I dared say nothing to-day. He told me that he hopes to go, at the end of the week, and engage a room at the college for my son. I have no time to lose, but I hardly hope to be able, in a morning or two, to reverse the ingrained idea of a lifetime, and an idea that is so very

[1] M. de Bellegarde had particularly stipulated in the marriage contract that the Count should purchase certain property: but the Count refused to buy any property except in Normandy.

common. I was beginning to devote myself seriously to my children. They are no longer mere playthings to me: they absorb my whole soul. While I am trying to form their minds they develop mine—a crowd of new ideas present themselves to me, and I can say that I am beginning to foresee a true and solid happiness ahead of me and am regarding my duties in a very different light than I used to. Alas, it is but for my sorrow!

The thought of parting with my son has so affected me that I have not felt M. de Maupeou's insulting treatment of me as I should otherwise have done. He has forbidden his wife either to see me or write to me, and never more, he says, does he wish to hear my name mentioned. According to this creature, I am an especially pernicious and diabolical intriguer, and he does not wish his wife to have any further dealings with me. In vain did she protest against this harsh and improper command: useless for her or Madame de Roncherolles to take my part openly. He was not to be moved.

My cousin managed to send me word of the revolting details of this tyranny. I let her see how grieved I am. Her society was so agreeable and such a pleasure to me: I am so fond of her, and I often felt it a comfort to have been able to help her bear her trials—and to be deprived of this privilege is my sorest trouble in this business. The person whom she sent to tell me also declares that the real cause of the split is this—that the Président, who out of miserliness and jealousy means to confine his wife to his own estates, does not want to run the risk of being urged and advised to reconsider his odious intention. I can tell you I was very upset about it—yet, all the same, at heart I was more indignant than grieved: what is the explanation of that? I am fond of my cousin, I love her dearly, I pity her fate, but in spite of it, I don't know—I am

not so very unhappy about it. Alas! I am no longer as I once was—a few years back I should have been in despair at the thought of not seeing her again, in despair because of her exile—in despair, most of all, at having been the cause of it. The heart gets blasé, its springs break, and one ends, I do believe, by having no feeling at all!

M. de Bellegarde knows all about the President's horridness, and although he has not displayed much concern, still who knows but that it won't make him still less inclined to listen to what I have to say. These cold, feeble souls are often animated by a spark of which they are unaware. But as time is precious, I shall go to him to-morrow morning, and try to make him see my points which I think are unanswerable.

Since I have been a mother I have scarcely had my children out of my sight, and I have taken pleasure in looking after them. From the day of the child's birth should not the mind and soul of the mother take up with earnest care the charge the body has laid down? But if, through going out and about (though I have done less of that than most people do) or through inexperience, and lack of authority, I have lost many precious moments, at any rate, by thought and personal observation, I am daily making up for lost time—and now they are going to stop me doing so by taking my son from me.

I should compare colleges where children are penned up in herds to be trained and instructed, to public institutions for the care of sick persons whose poverty and dire necessity is such that they have none to turn to in the world. It is all right for those who have no relations, nor friends, nor money to help them, to go into these hospitals to be cured of the ailments that afflict them. But what would one say of a man possessed of a decent income and the means of providing for the ills of life, who left his own home, tore

himself from the bosom of his family and the arms of his friends, and went and trusted himself to the casual ministrations of a hired stranger. What one sees in these establishments is more often a spectacle of human suffering and the dire extremity to which it may come than any picture of help or comfort that poverty is supposed to find there. Let poor orphans, children who through one or other of the woes common to our human lot, are left penniless, and with nothing to turn to save public charity, go to colleges to be educated—it is for them that these places are intended.

The sick abandoned in hospitals have an advantage over children left forgotten in colleges: there, the doctor notes the constitution of the patient, and according to his diagnosis gives him the treatment proper for warding off the threatened disease. At college, on the contrary, certain general precepts, sometimes right, and often wrong, have to be applied indifferently to each child alike, without regard to bent or character, which cannot be individually studied or developed. The care bestowed upon the children in such places can only be general, inspired if you like, by honorable and conscientious motives, but however excellent this care may be, it always falls far short of that inspired by the affection and loving interest of a parent: inevitably the many small details connected with the care of children must weary a stranger, whereas they are a mother's joy—the more there are, the better she likes it.

The drawback which strikes one most in public education and which has the most unfortunate results, is the impossibility of acquiring that intimate knowledge of the character of individual children, without which a teacher is not likely to be very successful. Impossible to help him whose need one does not know. Would there not be the risk of giving bread to the

thirsty, or water to the hungry? And above all, will it not naturally follow that because one person is thirsty, I shall be giving drink to fifty who are not? Then is there to be a man expressly told off for each child, to study that child's character and consider the best means of forming it? Whatever sort of man would such a study demand? and were such a man to be found, then you would be turning public education into private education, but with just all the difference that there is between the special care inspired by natural feelings and that prompted by professional duty, which is often a thing apart from real vocation. There is also another decided drawback to the uniformity unavoidable in the public system of education, and this is that the child's future career cannot possibly be taken into account in time. The boy destined for the Law is brought up as if for the Army: the soldier as if for the Church: and according to this arrangement, which is not only very peculiar, but also entirely opposed to common sense, none of the children are equipped for what they are eventually going to take up, so that they all end by coming to their professional duties quite unprepared for them. Some fathers and mothers (I know such) who have many children to provide for, go so far as to think it would be an indiscretion on their part to let out their intentions as to their children's future: they say that their plans are less likely to go awry if they are kept dark: and that they are a family secret. How unwise, then, to confide their plans to persons of whose real character and way of thinking they know nothing—persons who, as a rule, are fond of laying down the law and meddling. This just shows how a senseless system always entails more than one drawback, for such reserve is sometimes prudent. But why then entrust to persons to whom one would not dare confide a secret, something that is a thousand times more precious? Why hand over

to them the care of your children, your children who are your dearest possessions, and on whose welfare your own future happiness, your comfort and all the joy of life depends?

I think it should not be very difficult either to show how competition, which is the one good thing about the school system of education, can be a very serious handicap, in that it nearly always gradually resolves itself into conceit and an undue spirit of rivalry: it could, I am sure, be included in home teaching and with better results: for I have heard it said that all the competition, in colleges, is between some three or four scholars: the others, reduced through inferiority to abandon any idea of taking first place, remain disregarded, and do not try to get on and no one tries to make them. This is what I shall try to point out to M. de Bellegarde: I confess that I should be heart-broken were it not that I hug a little hope of success.

The Diary

How dangerous prejudices are! How blind they make one! Ah! Guardian, I am heart-broken, and more than that—I am really angry. My son is to go to college. Not for one moment would M. de Bellegarde listen to a single argument of mine—not that he found them bad, but he simply did not chose to hear them. His sons went to college, he, himself, was at college, and so was his father, his grandfather, and for aught I know, his great-grandfather. And so his grandson must go to college too. Our fathers never questioned the wisdom of this form of education and we must respect the opinion of our fathers—they were better than we. "But," I returned, "our fathers believed in witchcraft." "My daughter, my daughter, your son will go to college, or I'll wash my hands of him." What reply could I make, Guardian,

with a husband like mine? To have to submit to this is frightful and will be a torture to me. But tell me now how is it that M. de Bellegarde (who can never be firm with his children when it comes to opposing their wishes, especially with M. d'Epinay whom he neither likes nor thinks well of, and who has no common sense and has never given a sound reason for anything in his life) will not listen to the strongest arguments and proof when put forward by me? This contradictoriness together with my being forced to submit sickens me. I have told him that I am going to spend four days in the country with a lady I know and that he can avail himself of the opportunity to take my son from me, for, as for my consent, they can pretend that I have given it, but I have not and am not going to. Oh, truly a woman's lot is a hard one! Everyone and everything seems to be united against me now. M. de Bellegarde is very sore over the iniquitous conduct of Count d'Houdetot who issued a summons against him yesterday for the payment of his wife's dot. The Countess came to see her father, who was extremely incensed: she threw herself at his feet and begged him not to include her in her husband's disgrace. She burst into tears, and we were all much moved. The interview between her and M. de Bellegarde was most touching, but he is mortally hurt and I really am afraid that the annoyance this behaviour has caused him may shorten his days. All around I see nothing but scandalous behaviour on the part of ungrateful persons. The poor Présidente de Maupeou has now departed to her estates. They say the trip is for six months, but those who know say that she is not likely to come back for many a year. I pity her with all my heart, she must be in despair. I wish at any rate that I could let her know how I feel for her, but I shall never so much as hear her name mentioned.

Eight days later

Ah well, my child has gone. They took the hint I gave them and sent him to college while I was away. I expected it, but all the same when I came home and did not find my son, I felt so dreadful that for two days I neither drank, ate nor slept: I felt as if I had lost my all. They told me that he cried a lot at parting with my mother, and that they only managed to quiet him by telling him that he would find me at the college. I have already been twice to see him, but in future I must deny myself this consolation, for I see that my presence will distract him and upset his studies. He wanted to say good-bye to his father, but as all that has been heard of that person in this house for the past fortnight has been from the endless stream of creditors who have served him with writs the child could not see him, and I really believe that his father is unaware that he is at college.

The Diary

To-morrow we are all going to the country. I am taking my children, as M. de Bellegarde has allowed me to take my son from college for a little time: they will be my sole resource. Mlle d'Ette cannot come with us, as business of her own and of the Chevalier de Valory keep her in Paris. Yesterday the Chevalier said to me before her: "I assure you, it is an excuse for I don't need her at all." "So he thinks," said she, when we were alone, "I am useful to him, but I never have to seem to interfere. But if I were not there he would be in a fine muddle. Trust to me, and as soon as he no longer requires me, I will come and look you up." I could not but admire her delicacy, and wish that all my friends were like her.

M. de Francueil will not be able to stay at Epinay until three weeks from now: he will give me, he said, every moment he has free from his father. He seemed

so to feel having to see me go without him that I plucked up courage to bow to hard necessity.

M. and Madame de Jully will come and spend the first weeks of our stay at Epinay with us. I doubt whether the life we propose to lead there will suit Madame de Jully. I don't know quite what to make of her character. She seems wholly taken up with herself—with her face and how to make the best of it. She is tall, very well set up, and more handsome than pretty: her conversation is usually disconnected: her manner is cold and casual when she talks: however, she listens attentively, and every now and then she makes a remark that shows she has more intelligence and decision than one would think. She is friendly enough towards me though it has flashed across me now and again that she is studying me. I told her so once and she burst out laughing. "Study a woman?" said she. "Labour in vain for a man, and waste of time for a woman: we are all alike, and we know our secret." I tried to tack a more subtle meaning on to these words than she had probably intended. A week spent together in the country will enlighten me more as to what to make of her. She is eight months pregnant and none too pleased about it.

Letter from Madame d'Epinay to Monsieur de Lisieux

Oh, Guardian, Pauline is such a pretty little creature! She is only three years old,[1] but singularly intelligent for her age. Her brother and she spend nearly every morning with me. I think my son will be very clever. He learns very easily. I am teaching him his notes on the clavecin, and I try to arouse his

[1] Pauline was not the child's real name. She was Françoise Therese d'Epinay, born 24th August, 1747, and was then under three years of age.

interest so that he asks me questions. I can only have them all to myself in the mornings as after dinner my parents take possession of them: they tell them such silly stories, and if my son starts playing by himself and makes a noise, then they scold him and make him be quiet. To stop a child from making a noise is the way to make him dislike being with us and only like being with the servants. I let them be perfectly free, and I think that gives them confidence. If I get tired of it, I try and attract them towards some quieter sort of play, and if I can't get them to do it, I pretend to be busy and send them for a walk. In fact I do whatever seems best at the time, and my method is so far successful that they do not like to leave me, and are never happier than when with me.

Madame d'Houdetot has dined with us twice. M. de Bellegarde persists in refusing to see her husband. I very much liked the tone that Madame de Jully took in a conversation between the three of us on the subject of the misdeeds of Count d'Houdetot. The Countess complained of her father's coldness and said that it was an insult to her to include her in the quarrel with her husband. "M. de Bellegarde does not include you, Madame," said Madame de Jully, "but anger is so foreign to his nature that if he cherishes it towards one person it is bound to be reflected towards others as well. Whenever he mentions M. d'Houdetot or M. d'Epinay, he glowers at the lot of us for a couple of hours and I, at any rate, am not concerned with their offences. I advise you to leave it to Time to efface this painful impression before you try to get your husband back into your father's good graces, and as for you, Madame, the more often you see your father, the sooner he will overlook M. d'Houdetot's crimes."

She also made several remarks on character in general, that pleased me greatly. I think I shall end

by forming a high opinion of her, but I do not know if I shall like her. I find nothing in common in our characters. She often sees Mlle Quinault, who seems to be a very great friend of hers. She is forever telling me what a clever and exceptional woman she is. She has even suggested taking me to see her, and she assures me that at her house one really gets to know the world, for all the best people in Paris are to be met there. I should much like to have your advice before doing anything. Madame de Jully returns to Paris to-morrow. She is just about to be confined. I have promised to go and see her while she is laid up. This evening I expect M. de Francueil, who is going to spend three days with us. Mlle d'Ette will not return this month.

Her guardian advised Madame d'Epinay to stick to her home-keeping rôle and not to run after social gaiety. He said that he knew Mlle Quinault and that she did move in good society, but he advised his ward not to be too intimate on account of a certain freedom of tone in the lady's circle. He said that Mlle Quinault was extremely clever, but beyond originality of mind had not much else to recommend her.

The Diary

All went well, and Madame de Jully has a son. I spent the first few days after her confinement with her, and there met Mlle Quinault, whose acquaintance I have now made. She called on me yesterday: I was out, but I returned her call to-day. She is exceedingly clever, but all the same I am not sure that those privileged to visit her are not overinclined to imagine that they are under compulsion to be clever too. At her age her habits and ways are permissible, but they say they were not always quite nice, and in spite of a certain pedantic affectation of manner, she occa-

sionally makes rather strong jokes. Her heart must be better than her head to make people forget her former position. Francueil always refers to her as the Ninon of the century. I met M. Duclos at her house and he asked if he might come and see me. This request from so distinguished a man as the Author of *Confessions of the Count of* . . . though it flattered my vanity, embarrassed me, for I fear his frankness which sometimes degenerates, so I'm told, into rudeness, besides I should not care for my parents to know that I see anything of Mlle Quinault, for my mother, being so religious, would think it a crime, and M. Duclos knows nothing of keeping anything dark.

I am back in Paris for five or six days, and then I return to the country. I shall see my children again, and I am impatient to get back to them. If I did not so dislike being separated from them I admit that I should find nothing more agreeable than being here all by myself. I devote my evenings to Francueil, and my mornings to Madame de Jully or other friends whom my bad health has compelled me to neglect for some time.

Three days later

Yesterday Mlle Quinault paid me a visit. She pestered me to go and dine with her and I could not very well refuse. There were five of us: M. le Prince de . . ., the Marquis de Saint-Lambert, M. Duclos, and I. The Marquis is exceedingly clever, and not only is he a powerful thinker but there is delicacy and taste in his thought as well. He writes verse, and not amateur stuff either, for he is a true poet. One can see plainly enough from the freedom and confidence pervading this circle that they think a great deal of, and are sure of one another. One hour's conversation in that house gives one a wider outlook and more satisfaction than almost any book I have read so far.

Until dessert, conversation was noisy, and general —desultory talk about the ballet and the new taxes and nothing much else. At dessert Mlle Quinault signed to her niece to leave the table. She retired and so did the servants. She is a young girl, about twelve or thirteen. I asked her aunt why we were not to have the pleasure of seeing more of her, for she did not, as a matter of fact, put in an appearance till just at dinner time. "It's our rule," answered Mlle Quinault, "she must keep in the background." I passed some complimentary remark to the effect that her niece bid fair to be very attractive, and I wanted her to call her back. "Ah, no, if you please," said she. "Quite enough that we should restrain ourselves up to dessert, for that baby. Now, when we can put our elbows on the table and say just what comes into our heads we don't want servants and children about. Eh—enough—enough—it won't be so easy to make the tender Arbassan (this is what they call M. Duclos, though I do not know why) keep his tongue in check before us. We couldn't talk freely before the child."

"Faith, Madame," returned M. Duclos. "You know nothing about it, I should show her things in their true light, right away. Just let me try." "Oh I've no doubt," said she, "but the days are gone when a spade was called a spade, and one must pick up the language of one's own period and country while one's young."

Duclos: "And that's not Nature's which is the only right language."

Mlle Quinault: "Yes, when it has not been twisted, for language or no language, Nature has been working away at what we call modesty for many a long day."

Duclos: "Not on our so-called modesty of to-day: take savage countries, for instance, where women go naked till the age of puberty and are unashamed."

MLLE QUINAULT: "As you will, but I believe that the germ of modesty was inherent in man."

SAINT-LAMBERT: "I think so too: Time, purity of morals, the itch of jealousy, and the interests of pleasure have all combined to foster it."

DUCLOS: "And education has done a lot to bolster up the sublime virtues designated as 'the proprieties.'"

THE PRINCE: "But at one time, not only savages but everyone went naked."

DUCLOS: "Yes, indeed, all mixed up together, fat, plump, chubby-cheeked, innocent and gay: let's have a drink!"

MLLE QUINAULT (singing as she poured him a glass):

"Il t'en revient encore une image agréable
Qui te plait plus que tu ne veux."

"True—this garment that fits so beautifully is the only one with which Nature has provided us."

DUCLOS: "Cursed be he who first thought of putting another on top of it."

MLLE QUINAULT: "He must have been some humpbacked, skinny, deformed, little dwarf, for no one good to look at ever wants to conceal himself."

SAINT-LAMBERT: "But whether one is good or bad to look at, one has no sense of modesty when one is by oneself."

I: "But is that really so, Monsieur? I seem to have the feeling just the same when I am by myself."

SAINT-LAMBERT: "It is because we are in the habit of being modest before others that we still continue to be modest when by ourselves, Madame, but you must allow that it is not much use to take the feeling home, for it gradually wears off, and becomes less sensitive."

DUCLOS: "That's sure: I swear to you that when there's no one to see me, I hardly blush at all."

MLLE QUINAULT: "And never when anyone does see you. A fine comparison! the modesty of Duclos!"

Duclos: "Faith, it's as good as anyone else's. I bet that you, all of you, when it's hot, kick your sheets to the foot of the bed. Then good-bye modesty, fine virtue, that we fix on ourselves, in the morning—with pins."

Mlle Quinault: "Ah, there's many a virtue like that in the world!"

Saint-Lambert: "How many vices and virtues are there which were never included in Nature's code nor inscribed in the regulations of universal morality?"

Le Prince: "There are a multitude of purely conventional vices and virtues, according to country, customs, and even climate: but the evil which was inscribed in the code of universal morality is evil always. It was evil 10,000 years ago: it is evil to-day."

Saint-Lambert: "The only morality that is inviolable and sacred is universal morality."

Duclos: "In other words—Law and Order—Reason, in fact."

Saint-Lambert: "The Will of all humanity."

Duclos: "Or in two words, Monsieur, the immutable decree of pleasure, need or pain."

Mlle Quinault: "That's very fine—what he's said: he talks like an oracle. Let's drink to the oracle" (and we all drank to him).

Duclos: "If I were to go back to the very beginning . . ."

I: "To the beginning?"

Duclos: "I should see the human species scattered stark naked on the face of the earth."

Mlle Quinault: "You seem to like that idea from the way you keep returning to it."

Duclos: "Yes, but I was going to remark that if anyone at that time did cover himself with an animal's pelt he did so because he was cold."

I: "And why not from shame?"

DUCLOS: "What for? because of being what he was?"

THE PRINCE: "And yet there comes a time when Nature herself seems abashed and contrives a veil with which to cast a shade."

MLLE QUINAULT: "Fine, Messieurs, this is becoming scientific."

SAINT-LAMBERT: "If that were Nature's intention, she would not take so long about it: besides she casts her veil where there is nothing to hide."

DUCLOS: "Ah, were we all uncovered, what beautiful arms, what tumbled heads to say nothing of all the rest, should we not see!"

MLLE QUINAULT: "And it might cost less to be more beautiful—and may be better."

I: "I think that whatever one's idea of modesty may be, one cannot separate it from the sense of shame."

THE PRINCE: "But, Madame, what is shame?"

I: "I can only explain what I mean by shame, by saying that I feel a dislike of myself every time I am ashamed. I have at such times, as it were, a desire for solitude, and a feeling of wanting to hide myself."

SAINT-LAMBERT: "Very well put, Madame, but this dissatisfaction with yourself would not exist were it not that you were conscious of some imperfection, that is certain. If the imperfection for which you blush is known only to yourself, the feeling of shame is swift, slight and transitory. On the other hand it is prolonged and bitter if the censure of others is added to that of your own conscience."

I: "If that be so, why then am I relieved when I own the reason of my shame?"

SAINT-LAMBERT: "Because mere confession is to your credit, which is proved by the fact that you probably would not have had the courage to look anyone who had guessed it in the face."

DUCLOS: "That's precisely why I always acknowledge my faults."

MLLE QUINAULT: "When you see that it's no good to try and hide them."

THE PRINCE: "Then there are faults and faults. Those that we own are next door to virtues. There is more to be gained than lost by admitting them."

I: "Once you say that man can go naked unashamed, you will admit a good deal more."

DUCLOS: "Ah, no doubt. But for the precepts and example of your mother, and your nurse's lectures, you would have dared to do so."

THE PRINCE: "It is a funny thing, but it is only among human beings that one finds this shame in obeying natural impulses."

SAINT-LAMBERT: "Yet Nature is not only respectable, viewed merely as in her broad and general aspect: whenever she is in command she becomes the fount of a mutual sympathy, affectionate friendliness, and active kindliness that permeate all other feelings."

MLLE QUINAULT: "It remains to be seen whether those objects which, simply because they are concealed from our eyes, so powerfully affect us for good or ill, would not leave us cold and unmoved could we always behold them: there are instances of this."

DUCLOS: "Do you think that tact would also dwindle to insignificance?"

SAINT-LAMBERT (enthusiastically, presenting a glass to Mlle Quinault): "Mademoiselle, I beg you give me a glass of champagne. Messieurs, I will write you an ode, and you shall see that the most delightful of all human alliances is the one that should have been the most solemn. Legislation has missed the mark. Why do not youth and maid present themselves? . . . (Blank in MS.) Why does not the . . . (blank in MS.) lead the wedded pair thither and why is not the

sacrifice consummated under a vast veil? Around them loveliest perfumes should have risen and sweetest music drowned the young bride's cries and sighs: noble, voluptuous hymns should have been chanted in honour of the gods, invocations on behalf of the child to be which would have invested the ceremony with solemn importance. The bride, instead of indulging in petty, shrinking timidity and foolish tears, would have feared lest she should avert the blessing of the gods upon their union, and their favours from the child to be conceived in her womb."

Mlle Quinault: "There's a sublime thought Worthy of Pindar or Anacreon. There's your true poet!"

Duclos: "Ah, my word, I'd go to a wedding every day, if they were all like that."

I thought at first that this was a very strong picture to draw in the presence of self-respecting women: but M. de Saint-Lambert wove such lofty and serious thoughts into his portrayal that any first feeling of shock soon gave place to admiration. I was scared to death lest Mlle Quinault should interrupt him as she had done at first with some ill-timed joke: but as the Marquis developed his theme, he seemed to communicate his enthusiasm to us, and when he ended we applauded him for pretty well a good quarter of an hour, and so heartily that we could not hear each other speak. At last the prince took advantage of a pause to resume the conversation as follows:

The Prince: "But how comes it, now, that so natural and necessary and general an act should be done under cover?"

Saint-Lambert: "And so delightful!"

Duclos: "Because desire implies seizure. The man inflamed by passion carries off the woman for himself, just as a dog who seizes a bone carries it in his mouth until he finds a corner wherein to devour

it: and even as he eats it he glances round and growls, for fear lest it be snatched from him. I have already said to him who can hear that jealousy is the germ of modesty."

Again, I liked this idea very much, although I could have wished that the first comparison had been loftier.

SAINT-LAMBERT: "If Nature is very enlightened, she is sometimes very foolish."

MLLE QUINAULT: "Ah, very true. Drink, gentlemen, drink."

Each took another glass of champagne. Duclos tossed off three glasses, and the two bottles they had opened were drained in a minute. "Now," said the Prince, "let us go back to where we were. We were talking of a dog and seizure. What the devil was Duclos saying?"

DUCLOS: "Faith, Prince, I'm sure I don't know. But no matter. I can easily say something else, no trouble to me."

I: "Monsieur was saying that jealousy was the germ of modesty."

THE PRINCE: "But—just one moment, gentlemen. There are other natural actions which we conceal, and which have nothing to do with jealousy."

DUCLOS: "Ah, by God! I should think so. He would indeed be shameless who was too lazy for self-respect. Faith! All said and done, it's as well to be private sometimes. The accompaniments of passion's transport. . . ."

MLLE QUINAULT: "Shut up. Duclos, you go too far——"

DUCLOS: "But, by God, I don't see. What I said was very mild."

SAINT-LAMBERT: "Madame, one is bound to admit that one can never speak up for innocence without being slightly improper."

DUCLOS: "Nor for modesty without being impudent."

MLLE QUINAULT: "That's why you speak so well. But change the subject, or use language fit to listen to."

In spite of Mlle Quinault's injunction the gentlemen's ardour had reached such a pitch that to restore the tone of reserve which the conversation was fast losing, I ventured to observe that there was, all the same, such a thing as shy modesty which was an undoubted sign of innocence and delicacy, and which, I added, is, and ought to be, generally respected.

"Certainly," said M. de Saint-Lambert, "'Tis a fair mirror that one fears to sully with one's breath."

However, the dissertation was soon brought to a full stop by a man who brought in a new poem by Voltaire: to me it seemed charming, and I thought the others criticised it too severely. The Prince and M. de Saint-Lambert were the only ones who stood up for the verses and the author. After it had been read the Prince turned to Mlle Quinault, and said, "Well, what do you think of it, Madame?"

"He's a ruffian," said Duclos.

"I don't know," said Mlle Quinault, "whether to regard the satire as offensive, but one cannot attach any importance to his praise."

"Why not?" said M. de Saint-Lambert. "No eulogy could have been put more neatly and more gracefully."

"Oh, yes," she said, "but he does it from no motive of justice. It's only to annoy one man that he speaks well of another."

"He has a fine wit," replied the Prince.

"Yes," said Mlle Quinault, "but very ill-natured."

"He is not to be trusted," said Duclos, "and one of these days he will go a bit too far, and then some filibuster who has nothing to lose by it will set fire to his fine goods and chattels—and a good thing too."

Saint-Lambert: "They'll never ease him of a kindly heart."

Mlle Quinault: "Oh, yes, that's the special virtue of the heartless."

Saint-Lambert: "It's the one virtue without which there are pretty few others. Oh, happy he who can examine his own life and find that the good and evil in it are fairly balanced. Oh, undoubtedly the real good Voltaire has done far outweighs the harm attributed to him, and when you add to that an outstanding genius absolutely indisputable, you will feel a good deal more than mere toleration for him, that is, unless you make up your mind to throw your Poussins, Raphaels and Guidos into the fire, because you have discovered some tiny imperfection in the corner of a picture."

Mlle Quinault: "Oh, oh, enough of that, and let's simply say that it's best to avoid these sort of folk altogether."

It was late: they were waiting for me at home, and I took advantage of a pause to take my leave, thinking as I did so, that when one takes the trouble to overturn a useful convention, one should at any rate replace it by some principles which will not only take its place, but will provide a surer curb than that of shifting opinion: and in any case it would be madness to pretend that man can return to a state of Nature.

Letter from Mlle d'Ette to the Chevalier de Valory

From La Chevrette

. . . All the talk here is of acting. Here, they are rehearsing, there, some one or other is haranguing away—some are trying on costumes and others make jokes, the point of which no one else sees. I have taken to watching the rehearsals so as not to be out of it, and I should not have been bored had I had some

to talk to. They are a flock of lovers. In fact the whole crowd is just a love-story on legs. Francueil and the little woman are as head-over-ears as on the first day. Gauffecourt the sexagenarian "bassett hound"[1] is very sentimental over lazy Madame Jully and she makes fun of him and listens to him by turns. When he is laughed at he goes back to our Emilie, who pities him, comforts him and pets him—and all so properly and nicely—you know her way when she likes anyone. Her sensitiveness is really almost absurd. Fancy, not being able to talk to a friend without tears in her eyes. I don't know that it does not suit her, though. Certainly she is an attractive creature. She is not at all pretty, yet here she is, one of four women who are remarkable for their beauty, and she effaces the lot. Duclos will be in love with her, if he is not so already.

As for her, she has no eyes save for Francueil, but all the same her craze for Duclos is amazing. Everything he says is wonderful: nothing is right unless he approves: he's the one man to swear by: such a mind, such a soul! Father Gauffecourt has already told her, as I have, to beware of him. "Oh, indeed!—we're unjust, prejudiced!" She has been told of Madame do Rochefort who had to request him to leave her house, and who lost her reputation all through him.

"That is quite different," said she, "what sort of influence do you suppose he is going to exert upon me?"

"He already influences your mind."

"Oh, well, if he should not treat me with respect, I can easily break with him."

"I don't know so much about that," said Gauffecourt.

"Well, I do," said Emilie, a little huffily. "What do you suppose he is going to say?"

[1] Mlle d'Ette's nickname for Gauffecourt.

"True or false, he'll say . . ."

"All right, Father, bear up! He's a scoundrel according to you. Really. . . ."

"Eh, what's that, my daughter," replied the "Bassett" taking her hands in his. (Gauffecourt really is just like a basset-hound—I don't know, he certainly has his good points, but I cannot bring myself to respect a man of his position who goes in for play-acting and who is only four foot high). "True or not, you never care to hear ill said of anyone you like, but I tell you that he can cause a woman a lot of bother without there being any question of her having compromised herself with him. Madame Desfontaines showed him the door after an intimacy of ten years' standing because he upset her house and set all her people by the ears."

"I tell you he is one of the straightest—I'm sure of it. Come, come, the rehearsal. Brother, Sister, Francueil, M. le Comte, M. le Marquis. Rehearsal! Rehearsal!" That's how that head of hers runs. But I am forgetting the tit-bit of all. In the midst of all this she goes and shuts herself up in her room every morning and gives her children their music and reading lessons and teaches them their catechism. What do you make of that? . . .

Mlle d'Ette describes in her correspondence the favourable impression Duclos made on M. de Bellegarde and how they all took his brusqueness for frankness. Madame de Jully and another lady who were not so enchanted, refused to act before him, and Mlle d'Ette informed Duclos of Madame d'Epinay's embarrassment with regard to the ladies' attitude. According to M. de Lisieux, Mlle d'Ette was always on the look-out for useful alliances, and had ingratiated herself with M. de Bellegarde and Madame d'Esclavelles, and she knew how to make the most of Madame d'Epinay's weakness. She tried to ingratiate herself

with Duclos, more, apparently, to take him in, than to tempt him, but when her efforts were fruitless, she took a most violent dislike to him.

But of her true character Madame d'Epinay was sublimely unconscious, and she notes in her diary that when the ladies made a difficulty and would not play before Duclos, Mlle d'Ette put everything right. "Really I am grateful to her. She thinks of no one but me. She is always warning me if there is anything likely to annoy me, and is more worried about it than I am myself. There are few friends like her."

The Diary

1st September, 1750

Francueil likes M. Duclos and is pleased he takes so much interest in me. I myself, so far, have an immense admiration for him. I am glad to see him and yet I do not find him very amiable. He amuses me at times: I like hearing him talk, but he makes me rather uncomfortable, and I never know what to say to him. I do not always agree with him but I can honestly say that I unhesitatingly defer to his opinion. Francueil and Rousseau think a lot of his opinion: then, also, he seems to like me, and I am glad of that—and why not? What harm is there in being pleased? I agree, it is vanity pure and simple. I cannot help it, I think and feel just as I have said. For instance, I am much more at my ease with M. de Gauffecourt. He has told me often that I have more brains than people think and than I myself think. All I need, he says, is culture, and to get into the way of talking with people who make me think. If this is so, no one could better supply my need than M. Duclos.

So she proceeded to talk with M. Duclos, and notes that "our conversations always begin with silence.

I wonder why." Duclos made out that with practice she would be the finest actress he had ever seen, a statement that made her parents weep for joy.

Madame d'Epinay, Duclos, and Francueil left La Chevrette for Paris. She invited Duclos to supper with her, and they supped alone as Francueil was unable to come. At supper Duclos led Madame d'Epinay on to tell him of her married trials, after which he tried to extract from her the name of her lover. She fenced, and he made love to her, demanding, when she told him that she had friendship and gratitude to give him, but no more, "Have you a lover?" And the weak Madame d'Epinay let out the secret. Duclos swore never again to make any declaration to her, exacting also a promise of secrecy from her—a promise she instantly broke as she mentioned the matter to Francueil that very night.

CHAPTER IV

1750–1751

"Of course you did not tell him of our relationship, did you?" said Francueil, when she retailed the details of her conversation with Duclos to him. His tone and manner sealed her lips, and she thought that she would put off telling him the truth till later on, Her guardian blamed her greatly for her indiscretion. which had placed her in Duclos' power to a certain extent, and he warned her that she would have to be very diplomatic with Duclos, for he was a man who liked to domineer. This advice was followed by an entry in the diary. "I do not know," wrote Madame d'Epinay, "if I see Duclos with other eyes, or if he restrained himself before, but his frankness really seems to verge on brutality."

The Diary

A week later

I shall never extricate myself by being reserved with Duclos: I have already seen what he is capable of, and I am going to tell you some things he said to me about Rousseau. "Apropos," said he (though the "apropos" had no reference to anything whatever), "I have been wanting to ask you how long you have known Rousseau."

"Nearly a year: I owe the pleasure of his acquaintance to M. de Francueil."

"What pleasure? His acting with you? It would have been better to make use of him in some other way, for he is a bad actor."

"That's true, but we ought to feel ourselves obliged to him for his kindness."

"His kindness? That's something new for him. But make the most of it while it lasts, or rather, don't get too used to little attentions from him, for I warn you he is not a ladies' man."

"What do you mean by ladies' man?"

"Bless me, why those good fellows who will lend themselves to your amusements to your heart's content, who will save you from rows instead of getting you into them, who are satisfied with everything and demand nothing, such a person as I should be, were you mistress in your own house."

"I don't see that my duty towards any relatives prevent me from making things pleasant for my friends: I do not think," I added laughing, "that you have found it dull with me."

Duclos, so quick to catch one's meaning, would not see, or pretended he did not understand what I meant, for he replied: "I am not talking of myself, Madame, and the proof that I like being here is that I come here and stop here."

"But has Rousseau grumbled to you?" I asked him. "I should be surprised at that."

"He—oh dear no—he knows better than to come to me with tales about people he knows I like—he is too clever not to keep in with them along with the rest."

"Oh, clever, no one is more so."

"The Devil! so you've spotted that, have you? The public has not your sharp eyes, but give him time, and you'll see that man will make the devil of a big noise."

"I am surprised that with all the possibilities open to his genius that he is still so hard-up—why does he not write?"

"Give him time to find himself. What the devil would you have him write? A man has to be happy

in order to write well, otherwise he can't turn out good ſtuff . . . but I've told him so anyway; it is perhaps more his own fault than the fault of other people that he does not get on better. Why has he such a dog's temper?"

"Now that is curious, for I have never noticed it."

"You wait—you'll have a tale to tell me about it presently. I don't particularly mind it, in some ways: when a man's down he needs be prouder than other people. Have an eſteem for him—eſteem—that's the word—that's exactly the feeling one should have for him. But don't go any further."

"And pray why not, Monsieur?"

"Do you want me to tell you? He is of too sensitive a temperament ever to become attached to women. You laugh? Faith, if you do not feel that, I'm sorry for you."

"Perhaps his temper is also due to his delicate feelings."

"I daresay; and pray, Madame, continue to put it down to that, for on this assumption you will behold a fund of the like quality in myself."

"Oh, Monsieur, I do believe you to be sincere, ſtraight, moſt honourable—but as for delicacy . . ."

"Eh, what do you call my behaviour towards you, then?"

"Well, if you want me to speak frankly, I think you are more ſtrict and rigorous a friend, than tender."

"Strict—why, bless me, yes, I'm your man there."

"But, really, for the laſt two days you have been finding fault with me, and never letting me have my own way on any subject."

"What the Deuce! Why don't you think as I do, and then I shall not be able to find fault with you."

Madame d'Epinay felt a little uneasy about Duclos, and then she had a conversation with Mlle d'Ette

which did not tend to cheer her up. She had observed that she felt unsettled and found nothing to do when Francueil was out of her sight.

"Goodness," said Mlle d'Ette, "are you still that way? I thought that infatuation was blowing over?"

"Why, what do you mean?"

"What I said—are you two still a pair of turtle-doves?"

"This is queer language and very different from what you used eighteen months ago."

"It is perfectly plain and no different from what it was before."

"What! calling it infatuation? . . ."

"No, I'm not calling the affection that you and Francueil have, and assuredly always will have for one another, infatuation: on the contrary, what I call infatuation is love's first frenzy, the witching illusion which is so sweet and which lasts so short a time. I thought that was all over, and was congratulating you from the bottom of my heart, for one is happier when it's done with. See how nice it is to be in your present state! Really—it is only I who could put up with you. Look here, my dear Emilie, you will never be happy until you can meet with joy and part without a pang."

"Oh, how we are to be pitied if . . . but are you and the Chevalier like that? I must say that it does surprise me, and I have been wanting to ask you about it."

"About what?"

"How you manage to spend your days without him, and without availing yourself of the opportunities you have had of bringing him here. I can't understand it. I could not be like that myself—I simply couldn't."

"The secret of how it is done is the lesson that Time, reflection and experience imparts, and I, for my part, make no moan about having learnt it. If our pleasures

have lost their keen edge, they will wear the harder. Taking all in all, one gains by seeing less of one another. The Chevalier has his faults, I have mine: and a combination of faults on both sides, and at close quarters daily, would mean good-bye to forbearance and the beginning of irritability and impatience. Besides, he's no longer a young man. So, I repeat, a little absence does no harm. . . . Why do you think that happiness is only to be found in violent emotion? It is a mistake, for, when you come to look at it, you pay dear for it and all you get is grief in return."

"Ah!"

"And what is worse it takes all the taste out of the milder feelings which seem insipid after an orgy of emotion. There are a thousand small but pleasant nothings which are to be had every minute, but which are non-existent for a heart concentrated on one single object."

"Oh, well, I find it's all the other way. Since I loved Francueil, he has been the centre of my world and nothing in Nature is uninteresting to me."

"I hope for your sake, my good friend, that you will go on with your mistake for a long time, but when you come to reflect rather seriously upon love, and your own experiences in love, you will see that one hugs one's passion more as an antidote for sorrow than for any happiness it brings, and that the best thing to do is to reduce it as soon as possible to . . ."

"Don't go and tell Francueil all this, Mademoiselle. . . ."

"No need to 'Mademoiselle' me for that surely? I promise you to say nothing. Child that you are! Time—Time—will be a bigger tell-tale than I."

"But do let Time do his own telling. There—I am worried, you have upset me."

"Well," said she, "here we are talking sense, and you are miserable. Come, come, write to Francueil as

cheerfully as I am going to write to my old friend: and you won't feel dismal any more. Rousseau is coming to-day and we'll make him talk. *Vive la joie*" (Cheer up!)

She went away, but only left me unhappy. I don't want to confide in her about M. Duclos. Having to manage that man does worry me so. The thought of it haunts me.

The Diary

M. d'Epinay has just arrived. As his last circuit was longer than the others his son hardly recognised him: in return, he said he was like an unlicked cub. He kissed his little girl who laughed and held out her arms to him as she does to everyone, and he was positively melted to tears. He then asked if his son was not soon to be sent back to college. "Next week," I said. "And we are thinking of getting a tutor for him." "He needs one badly," said M. d'Epinay.

At Epinay. Three days later

One of M. d'Epinay's friends has found him a tutor for my son. He seems to me very gentle, talks little, but when spoken to answers sensibly. He is a young man, and his name is Linant. He wears clerical dress but is not a priest. My parents like him very much. I, myself, don't quite know what to make of him, for I do not notice any signs of decided character. One thing prejudices me a little against him, and this is that he brags of being very nice-minded—but is it usual for nice-minded persons to mention the fact? Can it be that he is stupid? I fear he is. He is so courteous. . . . Still, I don't much like him. All things considered, I fancy he looks a bit of a tame cat. I am pretty sure that it is just that benignant, stupid look that has won my mother's heart, she is scared to

death of anyone being too strict with my son. M. de Bellegarde says he is a good Latin scholar, and has passed well. But that is exactly what I could dispense with, were I in authority to decide. I may be wrong perhaps, but I would rather have many other things to which it seems little importance is attached, but which I do think very important.

Duclos, to whom I wrote asking him to find out something about Linant, came yesterday evening, but is only staying till to-morrow: he says he is considered a very worthy man, "but, as for brains, I don't guarantee them," he added, "for the man who told me he had brains, had none himself."

And I too, my guardian, have turned scholar. Under whom? Guess. M. de Gauffecourt. He is teaching me Italian. I have already translated the three first books of *Jerusalem Delivrée*. As my master praised my work very highly, I ventured to show it to Duclos, but he soon squashed my vanity. "Not bad," said he, "but take my advice and don't go showing it to anyone."

"Why not?" said I. "I should like to have the opinion of my friends."

"And a lot of good that will be, except to make you look pretentious and frivolous, for you only started studying because Francueil is away: he will come back and the studying will stop short, and the translation will go to the devil."

"What a harsh, disagreeable thing to say!"

Madame d'Epinay mentions in her correspondence certain quarrelling between Mlle d'Ette and the Chevalier de Valory, and when Francueil returned she found in him an unwonted coldness. However, her thoughts were diverted from lover and friends by the death of M. de Bellegarde.

Diary

Several days later (*July* 1751)

The death of M. de Bellegarde was kept dark for some hours in order to avoid the first sealing of the Court of the Exchequer. M. d'Epinay's creditors, men and women, were already at the door, asking if M. de Bellegarde were still alive, and if there was any likelihood of his lasting much longer. Two of them left summonses.

The funeral took place next day. M. de Jully and Count d'Houdetot were chief mourners, and the body was taken to Epinay. After this, we were all present when the will was opened. While it was being read, my husband pressed his handkerchief to his eyes, but he was not crying: he heaved and swayed so as to look as if he was sobbing. M. de Bellegarde's legacies had been simply and wisely thought out: he left 30,000 livres to my mother. Independently of the equal share he leaves to each of his children, he entails all M. d'Epinay's portion on our children. In addition to the income that he settled on me at the time of my separation, he leaves me 500 livres a year, for each child born or to be born, as a substitute for the contribution that I should be obliged to make towards their support, as enjoying a separate maintenance from my husband, and he wishes me to lay out the said sum as I think best for the keep and education of my said children.

But as I have no wish that it should be thought that I had had a hand in anything, or had sought to humiliate my husband (for Madame de Jully pointed out to me that this clause in the will was generally considered insulting to him) and as a thousand francs or even ten thousand francs would not compensate me for the contempt such conduct would merit, I forfeited the legacy.

The next few days were taken up with the inventory. They commenced with the ready money and capital of the deceased, then came the distribution, and never was there anything like the indecency with which this business was conducted. If there had been a kingdom to parcel out, Count d'Houdetot could not have been more intriguing and suspicious.

M. d'Epinay wanted the land, but Count d'Houdetot, spotting what he was after, caused it to be put up beyond its value. It was the same as regards the Paris house that M. de Jully wanted. Madame de Jully and I confided our fears to the notary, who assured us that the appraiser appointed was a man of the strictest integrity. All the same, a very high estimate was put, for instance, on a large number of rents owed, so I have always heard M. de Bellegarde say, by persons who were insolvent. I warned M. d'Epinay of this, for he knows nothing of business, but he also has no notion of letting anyone else interfere with his business, judging from the way he received my advice. "Don't you worry yourself," said he, "I shall not do anything without consulting d'Houdetot, he's up to lawyers' dodges: you be quiet, no one's going to do us: he has already given me some excellent tips."

Madame Jully was as upset and scandalised as I was. "But it won't do to delay the winding-up of affairs," she told me, "by aggravating bitterness and ill-feeling, for we shall only be told 'It's the women who are making all the trouble.' But, patience, sister, they shall get their own back: I'm keeping a suitable 'thank you' for them up my sleeve."

As for Countess d'Houdetot, she behaved very well indeed: she seemed to feel her husband's barefaced greed greatly: but she treated him very sweetly, though he simply accepted her consideration as his due and I am afraid that he will only take advantage of it. He on his side fondles her in none too refined

a manner, or else scolds her roundly and roughly, and always for petty little things—forgetfulness, carelessness or childishness. She is eager, sensitive, and very affectionate, and she answers him with madrigals that really might be epigrams on the pair of them.

Finally M. and Madame de Jully decided to hang on to the cash, so as to make sure of not being done, as they might have been if they took the Paris house that they wanted. And M. d'Epinay, who thought himself sharper than the others because he managed to exchange the pictures which had fallen to his share for the books he wanted—goodness knows why—ended by taking the grounds and houses at a price above their value, and he was left to pay all legacy duty, on the ground of his being in a better position than his brothers, because of the appointment he holds which brings him in a considerable income. Moreover he accepted 20,000 francs in settlement of the debts of the bankrupt tenants, although they really amounted to 35,000 pounds. He agreed to everything although aware that the family had already taken a decision to insist upon his purchasing an estate 60 leagues from Paris to ensure the maintenance of the entailed estate, if he took his share in cash. His portion, as eldest son, amounted to 1,700,000 livres. The others had from 1,400,000 to 1,500,000 livres.

Yesterday I saw my mother, who on account of my husband's and my separation, and M. d'Epinay's irregular ways, has made up her mind to leave us and take a house of her own. I found her so pleased with her home, so happy by herself—though I had so feared the loneliness for her—that I had to forget my own sorrow in being parted from her in joy at her content. I spent two very delightful hours with her and left her, feeling that the state of a truly religious soul is a very happy one: but for that state—one needs be what I am not.

I cannot reconcile myself to Francueil's habit of getting drunk. Yesterday, again, at Madame de Jully's—can it be that he is driven to drown his sorrow at having to live without me? But why choose a form of dissipation which surely leads to indifference and forgetfulness? Have I tried to drown my trouble? I solace myself with my sorrow's very cause, while waiting for it to end. Of course I have not that sort of temperament, I allow: men, as a rule, cannot put up with much contradiction. Ah, why can't they leave love alone, then? I thought I was like to pay pretty dear for a moment's drunkenness of his.

Yesterday we supped at Madame de Jully's: I had written a note to Francueil, whom I hoped to meet there. I slipped it neatly into his hand when he led me to table. . . . Supper was a very merry meal. M. d'Epinay was most friendly towards Francueil, but he encouraged him to drink, and tried, when he saw he was a bit the worse, to lead him on to say things which he could turn against me. I was in terror all through supper. Happily he let nothing drop, though the way he protested that he was not to be drawn was enough to show what he might have said. This scene, which placed him in a very ridiculous and myself in a very uncomfortable position, filled me with sadness, but judge of my feelings, after supper, when we were all assembled in the drawing-room—the ladies seated and the men standing a little apart from us—and a dispute arose: a bet was made: Francueil pulled out his purse and let drop my note at my husband's feet. He pretended not to see it, and tried to push it behind him with the tip of his shoe. I saw it and wanted to pick it up but strength failed me. I whispered to Madame de Jully, "Quick, quick, get that note, it's for Francueil, and don't give it to anyone, not even to him."

She made one dart, snatched up the note just as

M. d'Epinay was putting his foot on it, and darted back again as if she was playing a joke on someone, signing to my husband not to say a word. He came up to her and said, "I'll keep the secret, but on condition that you will let me share it."

"That depends," said she. "I'm going to enjoy it by myself first, and if it happens to be important, or compromising to anyone, I shall return it to the person concerned, and no one shall see it. But as far as I can see, it is some attorney's screed." . . .

When my husband had retired, she asked me what she should do with the note. "Keep it," I told her, "till we have all gone, then read it to M. de Francueil, and tell him how he dropped it, and then burn it."

"I tell you," said she, "that there's no trusting him to-night, for he is drunk and does not know what he is doing."

"But what am I to do then?" said I, "for I am anxious for him to know its contents."

"Could I, without indiscretion, deliver a message?" she replied with a smile.

I hesitated a moment, then I decided to ask her to tell him to come to-morrow at four o'clock because M. d'Epinay had to go to Versailles, and I took back the note, and put it safe in my bodice. The rest of the evening they had music, but I heard not a note. I was so upset by what might have happened to me that I was perfectly dazed. I did not sleep a wink all night for thinking of it.

I am waiting for Francueil. My husband left at three o'clock and it is past four. Francueil is no longer punctual.

One thing surprises me and I cannot make it out at all. Jelyotte, the noted opera singer, was a regular fixture at Madame de Jully's all last winter. He has

a style and easy assurance to which I cannot accustom myself. I know a number of good houses where he is received but it always seems strange to me, and when he loses twenty louis at *brelan* I cannot help feeling surprised that they take his money. He is really most agreeable company: he talks well, and has quite the grand manner without being a coxcomb: it is only that he adopts a tone above his station. I really feel sure that he would manage to make one forget that station, were he not bound to publish it three times a week.

The Diary

It was not Francueil, but Madame de Jully who interrupted me yesterday. She said, "I have come to carry you off to my aunt's for the afternoon. The visit to Versailles has been postponed till another day. My husband and yours have gone to the notary's who wanted to see them on some urgent business, and as d'Epinay might have spoilt Francueil's visit, I told him to come to my aunt's. We will all go and then no one can say anything. . . ." "I have been wishing for a long while," she continued, "that you would form some attachment that would make up to you for your husband's behaviour. If you had taken me into your confidence sooner, you would have spared yourself much trouble. I rather thought you were in love, but your conduct with Francueil was so discreet, and his life is so dissipated that I was not quite sure. Yesterday, chance played into both our hands, into yours because I shall ward off difficulty for you, and into mine, because it is the greatest pleasure to me to be of use to you."

Our arrival at Madame de Jully's aunt's put a stop to our conversation. Nothing could be odder than the tone of that set. The company is always

split up into two separate divisions, in two separate rooms, and those who wish to have a chat together, leave their hostess, with her two or three old cronies who sit spinning beside her. At the same time one or two of the company always stay behind with the hostess, and whenever a fresh guest arrives, one of them rises and, in the most natural way, announces the new-comer in what is called the young people's drawing-room, the individual members of which comport themselves according to their interest in the various fresh arrivals. I was extremely shocked by this at first, but I soon saw that there was nothing in these gay and innocent *têtes-à-têtes* to cause anyone who witnessed them to feel at all dubious, and I sufficiently adapted myself to this style of behaviour to have a comfortable chat with Francueil.

I seized this moment of freedom to reproach him with his foolishness of the night before and to lecture him well on the habit he is forming. I was very pleased with all he said, and had I been equally pleased with the way he behaved with Madame de Versel that evening, I should have been able to say that I had not had such a happy day for ever so long. She came about eight o'clock, and was shortly afterwards followed by M. de Jully and M. d'Epinay. One of Madame de Jully's sisters when she brought Madame de Versel to us, told us that our husbands had arrived. The young ladies, who accompanied her, clustered round a table to sew, and some of the men stopped to talk to them. Madame de Jully, Madame de Versel, Gauffecourt, Francueil and I sat by a window, and the rest of the company came and went to and fro, from one room to the other.

Several bits of scandal were retailed, but Madame de Jully cut them short, saying she did not like them, and it were better to leave slander to the devout and the old, for while one was still young enough to feel

the smart of a reprisal, it were advisable to keep on the right side of one's neighbour. "I can tell you I never believe anything," said she.

"Not even what's good?" returned Gauffecourt.

"You have me. No, I don't believe what's bad because I don't like believing it—nor what's good, because it's too hard to be good in this world."

"Well," said Madame de Versel, with her surprised, ingenuous expression, "then you only believe in God."

"Not even in God, my little mother, if you will have me say so."

"Ssh! sister," I cried. "Suppose your husband were to hear you."

"What if he did? One must never tell a lover that one doesn't believe in God, but it doesn't matter telling one's husband."

"Why this distinction?"

"Because one never knows what may happen with a lover, and one must leave oneself a loop-hole. Religious beliefs and scruples cut all things short, and one is not let in for any unpleasant consequences, or flare-up, or hullabaloo, when they are the reasons advanced for making a change."

"But," said Madame de Versel, "it is quite simple to tell your lover that you no longer love him, if you have ceased to do so."

The husbands came in, and this silly conversation stopped. We had supper and the naïve remarks of Madame de Versel were only too successful with Francueil. I fancied that she did not at all object to his being attracted. After supper we went to the Palais Royal, and Francueil gave an arm to Madame de Versel and me. He made barely any distinction between us, and I even had occasion to fear that if he did, he was more attentive to her than to me. We returned home at one o'clock, and I spent part of the

night asking myself whether I had or had not reason to feel satisfied.

Of Mlle d'Ette, Madame d'Epinay now began to entertain doubts, and Duclos' manner she found very trying, yet because of her unwary confidence she had to put up with his dictatorial manner and despotic ways. "You are not happy, poor woman," he told her, "and it's your own fault. . . . d'Ette is a minx, I've always told you so. . . . Let Francueil go, stay friends with him, but nothing more, for you don't want a rupture—and don't have any more lovers, I mean no more open lovers."

CHAPTER V

1751–1752

The Diary

A week later

M. D'EPINAY has now his full staff. He has three lackeys and I have two: I did not want more. He has a valet de chambre and he also wanted me to have a second lady's maid, but as I did not want more than one, I was firm. The retinue, including maids, and valets, is sixteen in all. Although my life may be somewhat monotonous, I hope I shall not have to change it. M. d'Epinay's life is a very different matter. When he rises, his valet de chambre helps him dress: two lackeys stand by to receive his orders. His chief secretary comes to inform him of the letters that have been received from his department, which it is his duty to open. He has to read his replies and get M. d'Epinay to sign them. But this operation is attended by a hundred interruptions of every imaginable kind. First comes a horse-dealer who has some very special horses for sale, but which are bespoken by some great lord or other: he has only come because he did not want to be less than his word, for the other party would give double the price to secure them: a glowing description of them is given: price is asked: Lord so-and-so has offered 60 louis: "I'll give you 100": no good, unless he cries off: however the bargain is struck for 100 louis without M. d'Epinay so much as seeing the horses, for, of course, the lord does cry off next day: this is what I saw and heard last week.

Next comes some young scamp who has a song to bray—to whom he extends his patronage to get him into the Opera, after giving him a few hints on good taste and on French singing, as it should be sung. Or maybe it's some girl who has to wait while they see whether I am in. I get up and go out: two lackeys throw open the folding doors to let me pass—me who could go through the eye of a needle—and the two footmen shout out in the ante-chamber, "Messieurs, here is Madame." They all form up in line, and these "messieurs" are sellers of dress material, sellers of instruments, jewellers, pedlars, lackeys, boot polishers, creditors, in fact the most absurd and wearisome crowd imaginable. Midday or one o'clock strikes before this toilet of his is accomplished, and the secretary who no doubt knows, from experience, that it is hopeless to discuss business in any detail with him, hands him a memorandum, instructing him as to what he is to say at the meeting.[1] Another time he will go out, either walking, or in a cab, and come back at two o'clock looking very disreputable and dine *tête-à-tête* with me or else invite his chief secretary to make a third, and the secretary tells him that something must be done about settling each item of expenditure, and delegating authority for this or that purpose, and the only answer he gets is: "We'll see to it." After that he runs about paying calls, or goes to the theatre: he sups in town, unless he has someone to dinner at home.

I see that my quiet time is over, and if he has not kept open house up to now, it is only because the plate was not ready, nor the house quite furnished to his fancy. The plate is very nice—not too gorgeous, nor too mean. The day after it was delivered, he gave a grand supper, that he ordered all himself, for fear I should not have it smart enough. On the evening

[1] General Meeting of the Farm.

before, he came to my room to tell me of this plan, and to show me the list of guests he had invited: they were twelve in number, and except for M. and Madame de Jully, and the little Countess de C—— and Jelyotte, there was no one else I knew. I pointed this out to him. "You can ask anyone you like," he said. I only invited Gauffecourt: it was very dull supper. The whole conversation was on horses, plays and girls. Jelyotte sang at dessert, and afterwards we played cards. At midnight, the ladies retired, and I did likewise. Next morning, I learnt that M. d'Epinay and two others had stopped up playing *brelan* and *trente et quarante* till two o'clock in the morning.

Five days later

To-day my son was to have come to my mother's to dinner, but he did not turn up. Linant sent a note gravely announcing that he had been compelled to keep the child in as a punishment for having "bungled' (so he put it) his exercise. This turned our little treat into a day of mourning, and I was nearly as disappointed as my mother was. My mother was pleased that I had asked Duclos to dine with her. I wanted him to tackle Linant for me, that I may satisfy myself with regard to his method of teaching, on the subject of which he has some yarn to tell me every time I raise any objection. I was quite upset about the disarrangement of my plans, being afraid that I should be forced to go and settle at Epinay before coming to some decision.

We had Duclos, Gauffecourt, and Francueil to dinner: the latter was serious and horribly preoccupied: true, the whole conversation was about my son, and my hopes and fears, but though that might have been uninteresting to some people, should it have been so to Francueil? I asked him, after dinner, what was the matter: he assured me that it

was nothing, and that he was as usual, so I thought I must have been mistaken.

After dinner Duclos suggested that he should go with Madame d'Epinay to the college, and as the other gentlemen had business that prevented them from going with them, the two set out together.

We found the child sitting at a table—with a copy-book in front of him on which he was making crosses and blots, for lack of any ideas on the subject on which he had to write. M. Linant, bare-headed and in a dressing-gown, was reclining, reading, in an arm-chair, with his feet on another. This posture did not greatly please me. I came in with an expression more pained than severe, as I wanted to make my son anxious, not to escape punishment, but to avoid paining me again: he came to kiss me: I drew back. "I cannot," I told him; "if M. Linant considers that you are not fit to be with us, my boy, still less are you fit to kiss me." The child, abashed, stood downcast beside me. Duclos, straightway, said: "Well, let's see, what's all this about badly done exercise. He is going to do it nicely, I am sure." My son ran to fetch it, saying, "Ah, Monsieur, it's so difficult, you'll see!"

"If it was nothing but that," said M. Linant, who had just put on his wig, "it would be bad enough, but this is the third day that this young gentleman has recommenced his task, because he has taken it into his head that he won't do it: nor is this the only complaint that I have to make of him."

"Let's hear the others," said Duclos.

"Well, Monsieur, what would you say of a child, who addresses his lackey as I would not address a boot-black?"

"Simply take the man from him: let him wait on himself, and he'll soon see that he can't do without

him: that will teach him how to behave to those whose services he requires."

"Yes, yes, very true, Monsieur, I have often thought of that: but this is not all. Of the fifteen Latin lines that he had to learn yesterday in class, he does not know ten, and when he is found fault with, he is bad-tempered."

"The Deuce!" said Duclos, "come, come, I'm going to set him an exercise that will do well enough: he shall go into the little room while we are talking, and before we leave it will be done, and perfectly too."

Duclos wrote down some ten or twelve lines that the child could understand, about the employment of time, the loss of which could never be made up, as the loss of fortune, or of things one has been used to, etc., could be. He was installed in the anteroom, and we three were left together. "Monsieur," said Duclos to Linant, as he came back, "that exercise was too hard, faith, I should have found it stiff, myself, unless I had rubbed the subject up, and I've been on the job for the last seven years."

You can imagine how vigorously Linant stood up for his exercise and his Latin.

"Well now," said Duclos, "you've touched on a very debatable point in education: anyone would think that every man should be brought as a monk. Look here, Monsieur, if you please: Monsieur and Madame d'Epinay have confidence in my judgment; let's go straight to the point. Tell me please, what is your system, and your time-table for the day. First, how is the morning spent?"

"Monsieur, we get up at six o'clock: then we have prayers."

"Are they short?"

"A quarter of an hour, Monsieur."

"Too long."

"M. Linant," I said, "do as you like as regards that."

"But, Madame," said Duclos, "are you not presuming to know better than Jesus Christ? *Orantes nolite multum loqui.* Those were His words. He did not like a lot of chatter any more than we men do: I bless Him for it."

"What I like about this quarter of an hour," I told them, "is that it is time spent in reflection."

"Well!" said Duclos, "so you imagine he thinks of what he is saying. But before proceeding further, Monsieur, who are you?"

"What, Monsieur? Who am I?"

"Yes, your father, your mother, what was their position? Where do you come from—what have you done?"

"Monsieur, I don't see what this has to do with . . ."

"The Deuce! you don't see. Why, before we can tell if you are fit to train someone else, we must know how you have been trained yourself."

"Oh, well, Monsieur, I was educated at the Jesuit College."

"I should have preferred somewhere else."

"I was one of their best scholars in Greek composition."

"I revere you for it—but do you know French, Monsieur?"

"Monsieur, I flatter myself that I do, and I think I have a right to say so."

"So far—good."

"I am the son of one of the stewards of M. le Duc. . . ."

"I know the Duke, his household has always been very well managed. I therefore conclude that your father is not rich, and I congratulate you on that."

"Your conclusion is quite correct, Monsieur, and I accept the congratulations. Because he was badly off, he made me take orders: but as I had no wish to be in the Church I scrupled to avail myself of more than the cloth. I am, however, tonsured, and M. le Duc obtained for me a nominal canonry to which a benefice of five hundred pounds is attached."

"I see that your conscience is very well regulated."

"My tastes are literary, and so I preferred to earn my living by work more to my liking, and more suited to certain talents with which Providence has perhaps endowed me."

"Has Providence, perchance, inclined you to the writing of poetry?"

"Monsieur, I have written some passable verse at times, it is a natural gift with me and I have not devoted much time to it."

"Ah, I know! Providence bade you 'Be poet,' and a poet you were right away! So like Providence! Monsieur, you fully realise that this sort of thing is not exactly what is wanted here. Be most careful never to impart the mania for small versifying to your pupil—it is the ruin of taste and sound thought. But let us return to the time-table. I gather that prayers are followed by dressing and breakfast, are they not?"

"Yes, Monsieur," said Linant, "then he has two hours in class."

"Very good, the usual routine," pursued Duclos, "so much for that. Since you attend the classes, I know what your job is."

"Of course, Monsieur," replied Linant, "what better could one do?"

"Exactly the opposite of what you do, Monsieur, for all this is not the devil a bit of use: and now, what about his reading?"

"Monsieur, we construe the *Selectae* together."

"More Latin. . . ."

"Then we have a little of the rhymed geography by Father Buffier."

"Oh, for shame, Monsieur," said I.

"Madame, it rams ideas into the head and imprints the chief points in the memory."

"Monsieur," said Duclos, "one should never learn what common sense bids us forget. And about the reading, Monsieur?"

"Monsieur, a little of the *Imitation of Jesus Christ*, and once a week Voltaire's *Henriade*."

"I must say, Monsieur," I said, "I don't care for this arrangement at all. I see no aim in it whatever."

"You're right," said Duclos. "Sir, a little Latin, a very little. And not a bit of Greek. I don't want the boy to be turned out a dunce or a *savant*, there's a middle course that can be adopted."

"But, Monsieur," said Linant, "he must know his authors—and a slight knowledge of Greek would . . ."

"What the Deuce are you crowing about now? What good will your Greek be to him? The Greek authors comprise some fifty old dodderers whose one merit is that they are old, and who have been the ruin of some of the best intellects, and if the boy fills his head with their works without being really keen on them, he will merely be a stuffy scholar, and if he goes and gets crazy over them he will make a fool of himself. None of it, Monsieur. But plenty on the subject of manners and morals."

"Monsieur," said I to Linant, "teach him to love his neighbour, to help his neighbour, and make himself beloved by him. That's the learning of which the world has need, and which none of us can do without."

"Ah, no doubt, no doubt, Madame," he replied, "but as some instruction and a little knowledge are requisite, he must obviously attend the public classes which cannot be run expressly for him."

"Well, Monsieur," said I, "he shall not attend them, give him his lessons in his own room."

"In that case, Madame, it would be infinitely better to have him at home."

"That's another matter which I am going to consider."

Duclos began to sketch, in some detail, the proper time-table for each day: "Teach him," said he, "to read and write well: make him study his own language thoroughly: nothing is more absurd than spending one's life acquiring foreign languages, and neglecting one's own: we're not going to make an Englishman, a Roman, an Egyptian, a Greek or Spartan of him, he was born French then a Frenchman let him be, or in other words, a man pretty well fit for anything. But, talking of what he is to be, it is up to Madame to decide what she will make of him. A little history, a little geography—but always with the map—a verbal lesson, for he is too young yet to take it up seriously. Let him learn to reckon well, Monsieur, for everything has to be counted and calculated. Presently we will lead him on to geometry—a very necessary branch of knowledge for everything goes by measurement: it is the best logic and keeps the mind direct—a very important thing, for nothing puts it straight when once it's gone awry."

"It is all very true," replied Linant, "but it makes more work for me than for the child."

"Of course," said Duclos, "but surely you're not lazy? If you are, give up the job, for you'll make nothing of it—I warn you."

"No, Monsieur, I am not that, and I shall have no difficulty in proving to Madame how zealous and attached I am. I am fond of the child, he is tractable, and has a nice disposition. Only I doubt my ability, for this is no usual style of education. It means the remodelling and recasting, so to speak, of a character."

"Who the devil said so," said Duclos. "Mind you—you have not got to change the child's character for (let alone that such an attempt is never a success) the most you could expect would be to turn him out a hypocrite. No, Monsieur, no, you've got to bring out the best in the character that Nature has given him. That's all that is asked of you. But let us go into his faults a little. Is he untruthful?"

"He doesn't tell untruths except to excuse himself."

"In that case, Monsieur, you are to blame. It is up to you not to give him occasion. If he is naturally truthful, the fault will die down of itself. But you must keep your eye on it, for if you give him too many opportunities for lying you will turn it into an acquired bad habit, which possibly he will never get rid of."

This reflection seemed to me very true, and I dwelt strongly on the necessity of avoiding anything that would lead him to disguise the truth. We had a little difficulty in making Linant understand what we were driving at, for he could not see how it could be better to ignore a fault and let it go unpunished than to put the child on the defensive and make him deny a misdeed by a lie.

Duclos apostrophized him also in a way that made me laugh inwardly.

"Is the child lazy?" he asked.

"Oh, very," replied poor Linant.

"Then I advise you, Monsieur, never again let the child see you in the posture you were in when we arrived. Eh! that surprises you? But you are the one who has to do the work here. Tell me now—what damn weight will any words of yours carry, however well and neatly it may please you to turn your phrases—and I can well imagine how you can roll them out—when he afterwards sees them contradicted by your own actions. What will be the

effect upon him of the spectacle of the preacher of work, enveloped in his dressing-gown, and wearing his nightcap, and stretched out on two chairs at midday? You must see, my dear M. Linant, that every little detail has its importance in your job, and it is necessary to be more consistent with children than with men who are never consistent."

"You are right, Monsieur, I feel that, and I will not again lay myself open to so just a rebuke."

If I had been shocked by his attitude when we arrived, I was so pleased with his ready apology that I conceived a greater respect for him. I told him so and also told him what my first impression had been. Undoubtedly such an apology under such circumstances is indicative of more than one good quality, and distinctly prepossesses one towards a man.

He also told us that my son is very obstinate and rather unkind to his valet. I bade him let nothing pass on that score and to continually rub into him the principles of justice and equity. "Another very important thing," I told him, "is never to permit him to order his servant to perform any degrading service. Under no circumstances permit this."

Then we discussed all sorts of subjects. I cannot really tell you all the excellent things said by Duclos in their order, but as he warmed up in the heat of discussion, he took himself off so satirically, that I, as I admired his daring, was dumbfounded by it. He has a way of putting things, so that they stick in one's head, but of Linant's replies, I remember little for he is not nearly so original and attractive. He is slow to take anything in in the up-take and is a limited sort of man but I think he is honest and more keen than capable. I would not say that he is entirely disinterested. He is smooth-tongued without being a flatterer. However, Duclos came out suddenly with "Don't go and make the stupid blunder of telling him

that pleasure and passion are wrong: I'd rather have him dead than condemned to forego them."

Linant was all out for thoroughly squashing any such thing the minute it showed the tip of its nose.

"Of course it is to be hoped that he may not tend to any excesses, I know that as well as you do," said Duclos, "but for all that I'd sooner have him a man of strong passions tearing the world over, like a runaway horse, in their pursuit than a thing of stone. The Deuce! he must learn to give as good as he gets—I, for one, stand no nonsense from anyone—and it's very essential—that. Inspire him with a taste for decent pleasures." Linant very rightly objected that this term was very vague and might be taken in various ways. I told him that my definition and the one to my liking was more precise. "By the word 'decent,'" I said, "I imply the bringing of the soul to bear upon every physical feeling." This led us on to reflections, explanations, exceptions of all sorts, Linant to all that was said raising some objection, so that I came to the conclusion that the language of intellectual or sensitive persons is incomprehensible to the narrow-minded.

"With regard to integrity," said Duclos, "set a very high standard before him: contact with the world will knock it down all right! And, Monsieur, not a prejudice in his head! Sweep them all away. An erroneous notion is not a scrap of good—not to mention that it never comes singly." On this point, however, I reserved to myself the right of appointing the limits. He advised him never to bid the child do anything without giving him a reason for doing it, for children should not be driven along like animals, but should be taught to take interest in and regard as important whatever they did, especially their tasks. "People talk of their feelings," he added, "but the only feelings by which one can safely be

guided are those acquired by personal experience, conversation and reading. If you teach him well, he will only dislike what he ought to dislike, and he will always know why he likes what he likes: all our knowledge is acquired through our senses. Make him use his eyes and ears: make him exercise his judgment in all the happenings of his daily life: thus you will ascertain whether he is vexed with himself when he has made a blunder, and whether he knows what is good when he sees it. But, Monsieur, make him understand, above all, that there are honest folk everywhere, but many more rogues, and it is a deal more important to discern the latter, for they do more harm in a moment than the former can ever achieve of good."

That was one of his remarks that made me ponder, but the next thing he said fairly flabbergasted me. Linant was telling us that he had the utmost difficulty to make his pupil polite. "Politeness, politeness," said Duclos, "I'd sooner he had the courage to be true at the risk of being called brutal, like me. In a country like this politeness is small change and everyone's pockets are full of it and no one is any the better off."

"But, Monsieur," said Linant innocently, "if we all told each other what we really thought, many would find their fellows unbearable."

"Then, Monsieur, such persons have only to hold their tongues, and so much the worse for those who regard silence as a slight." I can't make that man out at all, for that is precisely how I deal with him, as must be perfectly obvious to him, were he only a quarter as clever and shrewd as he is.

He checked my astonishment by a rather apt comparison which I do not think was his own as I rather fancied he had read it somewhere. He asked M. Linant if my son was fond of money. He replied that he did not seem as yet to know the value of it. "He must be taught it," said Duclos, "and tell him that

gold is only good according to the use it is put to. In itself it is neither good nor bad: but it is like a sword in the hands of a wise man or a fool. Anyway, he who knows how to keep the fortune left him by his father, is always rich enough."

The child interrupted our talk once or twice to show us his essay: at last we called him in. His essay was without any serious mistakes but was a quaint rigmarole, that, taken literally, would have conveyed a meaning beyond its author's wit or intention. Linant, with difficulty, laid aside his gravity for once. After giving the child a little friendly lecture, we returned to my mother's, and agreed as we went that nothing could be got out of Linant as long as the child remained at college, and Duclos undertook to induce M. d'Epinay to remove the child, once and for all. "By the way," said he to me, "you do wish, then, to leave him with some prejudices—it's your business, but remember to tell him that all he is told to do, even in the name of God, is only really from God in so far as it is good and useful to society, but be it written in the most sacred books in the world, if it be not of use either to him, or to others, it is not from God."

We arrived at my mother's where, most opportunely, we found M. d'Epinay. Duclos told him what we had just seen and heard. We all strongly expressed the opinion that the child ought to be removed from college and after a lot of talking Duclos carried his point, and M. d'Epinay promised to allow me to take my son into the country with me and keep him for good. This decision brought with it another, and a very pleasing decision for me: my mother consented to spend the summer with us. In ten or twelve days' time we shall go there and stay a week to set the household going, and make a few necessary arrangements, and then my mother will bring my son to us.

Madame d'Epinay was much astonished on her arrival at Epinay to see so much elegance and luxury which to her seemed "both indecent and useless though very agreeable". Gauffecourt, who was staying with her, was also much shocked. They both racked their brains as to how to bring M. d'Epinay to a sense of his extravagance, of which his wife foresaw disastrous results. Duclos, when he came, deplored "such nonsense". The rest of the house-party consisted of Francueil, M. and Madame de Jully and Jelyotte. Of Francueil, Madame d'Epinay entertained sad misgivings. He had changed: spoke lightly of women, a thing he had never done before in her presence, "seeming to respect all her sex in her." He still fussed over her, gave her presents, yet . . .

The Diary

I did not properly know Madame de Jully when I feared that she read my heart and blamed my passion for Francueil. I have just come in from a walk with her and my head is still all in a whirl with what she said. I hardly know whether to think well of her or not. I dare not commit myself to an opinion. This is the gist of our long conversation, while we were out for a walk together. We were walking along in silence, when, "Well," said she suddenly, in that indolent way natural to her, "you are quite happy now, sister, you talk to Francueil to your heart's content, now you're no longer afraid of me."

"That's so, sister."

"You never did a wiser thing than when you let me into your secret—but let yourself go, for talking *to* one's lover isn't enough—talk about him to me as much as you like."

"If I had something happy to talk to you about, I should make more use of you—but I am afraid of boring you and abusing your friendship."

"Abusing friendship! So that's all you know about it—as if one could abuse friendship. That's

just why friendship is Love's consolation, and why one should always seek a woman friend when one has a lover. The gentlemen do not require friendship—they find it demands too much of them. Love is a very different matter—besides when they have duly performed Love's requirements, they think all is said and done. We have to want what they want. But you're not listening. I believe you are crying."

"Yes, sister, I am—I am puzzled, unhappy, and I don't quite know why."

"But what is it that is troubling you just now?"

"I don't know—just vague suspicions, worries, for which at times there seems just cause—and none at all a minute later—one thing contradicting another."

"You must know, sister. . . ."

"Do you know anything? Ah, don't tell me—you called me 'poor fool' the other day—surely you had some reason. . . ."

"Ah! One can never say anything to you, you go and make a mountain out of a molehill. You've got to take Francueil as he is."

"Oh, yes, if I loved him less! But—surely you know the reason of his behaviour. Look here, I believe he is in love with Madame de Versel. You don't answer—is he? What do you think?"

"I don't think he is: but supposing he was, now see. . . ."

"Supposing he was! Ah! I can see quite well that it's all up with me. You laugh—how can you laugh?"

"I may well laugh, for really, sister, you're mad. I assure you I know nothing about it, and I should not laugh if I did. All that I'm laughing at, I swear, is the way you take a remark made at random, as confirmation sure. But you will kill yourself with this love of yours. Love Francueil, I hope you will—but treat him as he treats you, and who can tell if a change

of tactics won't bring him back to you? Why not console yourself with another lover, and thus bring his own inconstancy home to him?"

"For shame, sister. Could you?"

"And why not? Do you prefer to croak then?"

"Anyway, I should die faithful. He shall see what he has lost."

"Yes, but not before you have become ugly and sour."

"I shall become whatever I'm meant to become. Sister, you must be finding me a great bore—let us drop the subject: we look at things so very differently. You talk in a very odd way—I have never seen you so. . . . We can't understand one another."

"You *did* bring that out tartly! I do not like nor respect you the less for differing from me, and if you turn from me on that account, so much the worse for you: as for bothering me, I, in return, my child, inform you that I am also in love: I must be free to discuss my love-affair with you, and to communicate with my lover, through you, and meet him at your house. . . ."

"Your lover? . . ."

"Well? . . . So that takes your breath away! Because you married the eldest you think you are the only privileged member of the family."

"Sister, truly—I can't help . . ."

"Laughing—for you wanted to, and it's what we had better do. Drop your prudery—we are by ourselves, we can trust one another, so why be reserved?"

"I thought you were in love with your husband. He is so very fond of you. I never thought he gave you cause for complaint. That is why I am so surprised."

"That does require some explanation. I have not the slightest complaint to make of Jully. I have great

respect and liking for him—but have never had more than that."

"I thought you married him for love and that you loved him passionately."

"So he has chosen to believe, but that was never the case. These are the facts. De B—— was head-over-ears in love with me, and wanted to marry me. I should have consented for I liked him well enough, but I discovered that he had such a violent temper and was so jealous and so unfair, for—mark you—jealousy in a man always takes the form of unfairness and tyranny, that at last I really got frightened. Jully presented himself—I preferred him—and that is all."

"But what about all those suitors that he has told me twenty times you refused for him."

"He is quite right: I refused many offers, but they weren't worth considering. The more I know of M. de Jully the more I congratulate myself on my choice. He is a good fellow, kindly, easy-going, weak, no spirit, but no vice, just right for playing his part decently, and I am very grateful to him, for it's a great thing—that! But when he thought himself in love with me I can tell he made a mistake."

"Whatever are you saying, sister, he adores you as much as he did the first day."

"Is that what he says? Oh, well—he is mistaken again. There's a girl at the Comédie that he is giving presents to all day long. He would have her, if he had not paraded his passion for me, but in reality he is the one man I see least of and the one who least consults my wishes."

"Sister, sister you are unjust. Can you deny that your husband's one thought is what he can do to please you?"

"What! Because he is for ever giving me jewellery that I don't care about, and dresses which arenearly always exactly what I should not choose myself:

because he takes boxes at the theatre for me on a day when I would rather stay at home. Ah! don't you see that it's his whims not mine that he indulges? But beg him to yield one of his whims and fancies to mine, and you will see this pearl of husbands turn—oh, so gently—into the most despotic of sultans. Nothing could be easier than to make an unbearable man of him: one need only be very soft and yielding to accomplish that."

"You talk like an angel, sister, you are admirable, but I'm hanged if you mean a word you're saying, anyway your own conduct belies you, for you are gentleness and compliance itself. The pair of you seem to have but one mind."

"I daresay: that's the grand secret. With a man of M. de Jully's character, it's not so much a question of asserting myself everlastingly as of letting him see, on occasion, that I have a will that only bends when I choose. He knows it is there. That is sufficient. For the rest, yielding costs me nothing: in the ordinary way there are few things in life worth regarding as important. But we are wandering from the matter that I want to confide to you. I am in love, as I have told you. Do you know with whom?"

"No, indeed, is he Maurepaire?"

"No, he's Jelyotte."

"Jelyotte! You don't mean it, sister! An operatic singer! a man for all the world to stare at, and whom you cannot decently have as a friend!"

"Gently! if you please: I have told you that I love him, and you reply as though I had asked your opinion as to whether I ought to love him."

"True, but you also said that you wanted me to do you a service, and I tell you that I do not care to be M. Jelyotte's confidante or go-between."

"You are deciding a little hastily, my dear sister, and I should not care to hear you use the same

language twice: no need to drag in my lover's name—it is I who ask the favour—will you or won't you oblige me?"

"Oh, to you, sister, I could never refuse anything—but I must. . . ."

"Very well—now, tell me, is not Jelyotte an estimable man? Does not everyone consider him above his station?"

"Yes, and that very statement condemns you. Society will never condone it."

"Ah, my child, Society's a fool and he who attends to what people say, at the expense of his own happiness, is a bigger fool. Look here, Jelyotte is coming here to-night. You must put him in the blue room next to mine. During dinner I will complain of the noise my husband makes when he goes out hunting in the morning: then you must suggest to me that he should have the little room at the back of mine: I will agree, and all will be well."

"Ah," I told her, "if that is all you ask of me, yes, most certainly."

"Eh! what did you suppose then, if you please? You might have relied on me, sister, and felt sure that I should not compromise you. If a third person had overheard our conversation he would have thought . . . Ah, I daren't say, indeed, which of us is the more compromised. . . . Let's say no more."

At dinner de Jully himself asked that the rooms might be changed, observing to his wife, "If I wake you up in the morning, you pay me back when you come to bed". So the change of rooms was effected. The joy in the lovers' eyes reminded Madame d'Epinay of her own past happiness and brought the tears to her eyes. Francueil, who was a great friend of Jelyotte's and in his confidence, noticed, and coming up to her said, "Shall they be the only happy pair?" "No," said she, "not if you love me". Duclos promptly noticed how affairs stood with regard to Jelyotte and Madame de Jully,

and he warned Madame d'Epinay not to have the actor there or it would be said that he was her lover, or that she was acting as go-between for her sister-in-law. Rousseau, brought by Francueil, took fright at seeing so many guests and would not stay, but agreed to come some other time when there were fewer people.

There was one unwelcome guest, for, unfortunately, Madame de Versel had expressed a wish to dine at Madame d'Epinay's in order that she might meet and discuss with her friend Madame de Jully the details of a visit that she, her husband, and M. and Madame de Jully, Francueil, and M. de Maurepaire proposed to pay Madame d'Houdetot, with whom they were all to spend a fortnight. Madame d'Epinay, much distressed at the thought of Francueil leaving her, spoke to him, not wisely, out of the fulness of her heart, and he was annoyed with the scene she made.

Madame de Versel had to come, for Madame d'Epinay could not get out of inviting her, and alas! Madame de Versel was very pretty. A week later the party went off to stay with Madame d'Houdetot: Francueil, eager to depart, found Madame d'Epinay's excessive grief very tiresome.

No sooner had the party set off than Madame d'Epinay informed her husband that she also would like to visit Madame d'Houdetto at la Mailleraye as "she had never seen the sea" (Mailleraye was not far from the sea). Her husband consented to go with her, and invited Gauffecourt to come too. Passing through Paris, Madame d'Epinay saw Duclos, who told her that she was very silly and that people would say that she was running after Francueil, and that Gauffecourt was a fool to go with her.

The Diary, continued at la Mailleraye, records the incidents of a visit as uncomfortable as was to be expected. Madame de Versel was wearing a ring that Madame d'Epinay had often begged Francueil to give her but which he had always refused her.

The Diary

Epinay, August, 1752

Madame d'Epinay's visitors had departed, with the exception of Madame de Versel and Gauffecourt, who had promised to

stay until the latter lady took her leave. The two ladies were sitting together occupied with needlework.

The conversation turned, naturally enough, on the lot of a woman who has a lover. There is a mixture of *naïveté* and shrewdness in Madame de Versel's expression which makes whatever she says seem different than it would if said by anyone else. At times, she has the fixed astonished stare of a child.

Madame de Versel opined that to take a lover was to lose one's peace of mind. Madame d'Epinay informed her that to avoid deception it were well, on feeling the first symptoms of love, to find out, through a mutual friend, the character of the man one fancied.

"Ah," said Madame de Versel laughing, "that's all right when it's a matter of marriage, but lovers are in too great a hurry to stop to make inquiries. Besides, to make perfectly sure, one would have to question some neglected mistress who would have her reasons for warning one."

This remark caused my heart to beat violently. I answered sharply, "Her reasons are just what one wants to know. The troth plighted of one's own free will is more sacred than any other—and he who breaks it does wrong, very wrong."

"Eh, my God," returned Madame de Versel, amazed, "how very indignantly you said that."

I promptly bent my head over my sewing and hastily made a few stitches. "The one and only sorrow of love," said I, "is to be no longer loved, and I can never stand the light way in which people take that sort of thing. My God—how hot it is! Don't you find it so?"

"I—no—not at all. I'm frozen. There's a draught through that door."

"We've only to shut it," said I, rising, and then seating myself beside her, went on sewing.

"One thing I don't like about love," continued Madame de Versel . . . "and that is that it does not always last."

"True," said I, "and the one who loves last is much to be pitied."

"I have not had the experience myself, but I have witnessed something of the kind, which I think will safeguard me from the misfortune of falling in love."

"Certainly, sooner or later this misfortune is to be feared. We are rarely the first to fall out of love. Men have no scruples about infidelity and think we have no right to complain of it: for my part I infinitely prefer a definite break-off."

"You are right, but just think—there are women vile enough to take delight in stealing another woman's lover."

"Your thoughts are those of an angel!" I told her, enraptured. "One thing is certain—only the vilest creatures can amuse themselves with another's despair, but I would be yet more scrupulous," I added, drawing nearer to her. "I would like to make sure before I listened to a man's suit that he was absolutely free. His word would not be enough for me, I should want to find out."

"That is more difficult," she replied, "but whenever possible one should do so."

"Amiable woman! You are charming!" I cried, embracing her. "What a lovely mind! You enchant me!"

"How funny you are, Madame d'Epinay," she laughed, astonished. "Now I shall have to kiss you, for I only repeated your own words. Come, kiss me."

The conversation continued, and Madame d'Epinay displayed so much eagerness in her efforts to induce Madame de

Versel to confide in her, that the latter observed, "But the way you clasped my hands and the eagerness of your expression makes me wonder, 'Can she be a lover in disguise?'"

"Why does your voice tremble so?" she asked. "Only," the other assured her, from anxiety to see her happy with a true and constant man."

Slowly Madame de Versel divulged her weariness of a husband occupied with mistresses, slowly she admitted that she loved. . . . Madame d'Epinay, on tenterhooks, guessed the lover's name. Trembling, she asked if he were Francueil, and got it out of the lady that Francueil had courted her.

"Are you really indiscreet and caustic?" Madame de Versel asked.

"Who said so?"

"Francueil, and that was why he warned me expressly never to let you or Madame de Jully know that he was in love with me."

She proceeded to inform her tortured hearer that for five months Francueil had pestered her with his attentions so that she had almost yielded out of pity. Finally she said that she was in love with a M. de W—— and that he loved her. Madame d'Epinay's transports of joy at this announcement rang slightly inconsistent, since it appeared that the gentleman was not exactly the most desirable lover, as he had been courting Madame de Versel's mother and had deserted mother for daughter. Madame de Versel naturally inquired why she was so pleased, and Madame d'Epinay in her turn owned up and said that Francueil had been her lover. She asked for exact details of Francueil's attentions to Madame de Versel, who after a long rigmarole wound up with the information that, on leaving, Francueil had left her a note which contained the information that "he no longer loved her and yet which breathed of eternal adoration," but that on the whole she had found him a variable and moody lover.

"I will leave you, I must go and rest," said Madame d'Epinay. "I must be by myself, and think out things a little. I don't know where I am—whether I'm dream-

ing or whether I'm awake. . . . I'm trespassing on your kindness."

"Trespassing on my kindness? Not in the least," said Madame de Versel, "I could go on all night, if you like, but I quite understand that you may need rest. Good-bye, my dear friend. Till to-morrow, when we meet again."

CHAPTER VI

1751

The Diary

Now true it is that there is no one left for me to love in all the world: lovers, friends, all abandon me. Never a word do I hear from Madame de Jully and yet she knows how unhappy I am. My mother, my good mother is the only one who consoles me.

The consolations prescribed by the good Madame d'Esclavelles were of a religious nature: she urged her daughter to turn to the love of God, and begged her to have a talk with her own Confessor, l'Abbé Martin, whom, to this end, she invited to dinner. Madame d'Epinay having informed him that she was sick of the world, and but for her children would retire to a convent, and never emerge from it, the Abbé replied that he had no confidence whatever in sudden conversions for they were never lasting, and their reactions were always very trying.

"True devotion, Madame, and the state of soul most pleasing to God—in morals as in philosophy—consists in making the very most of that state of life in which it has pleased Providence to place us." A married woman, said he, was not intended for a Carmelite, and sudden conversions, at her age, were not of long duration.

"But," said she, "it is impossible to achieve salvation in this world."

"How so, Madame? Do you condemn to eternal damnation all those whose position compels them to be there? God only demands of us the exact fulfilment of our duties according to the position in which He has placed us. Before doing more than He demands,

begin by doing exactly what He does demand, otherwise you will be promising more than you can fulfil."

She told him of her troubles with her husband. "Your husband has given you just cause for complaint," he said, "but you will be a thousand times less tolerant of his faults if you go in for excessive devotion. That must not be, but it will be, simply because you will think that you, yourself, are in no need of forgiveness."

She then said that she was tired of living with the corrupt and faithless.

"But," said he, "men have been deceitful, variable, and intolerant since time began: it is nothing new. Again, this is not the motive acceptable to God when He would draw a soul to Himself. When our friends fail us, it is indignation and not piety that their conduct inspires, Madame. It only makes us a little more out of love with our fellow-creatures: but do you imagine that we love God the better for that?"

Poor Madame d'Epinay dissolved in tears and told the kind Abbé of her false lover. Said he: "*Now* I comprehend your plans for reformation, Madame, but I have less confidence in their durability than ever. Yours is the case of every honourable and unhappy woman who needs must go on loving. God is made the object of a feeling that cannot remain idle. . . . What you have confessed to me in no way alters what I have already said. . . . I cannot at present even permit you to receive the Sacrament, for I perceive in all you have said more anger than remorse. Begin, Madame, by occupying yourself with your own home duties, plan a new sort of life for yourself—looking after your mother, the education of your children, constant care for your husband's interests—in this way start your reformation, and then in a few years' time, if you still desire to attain to the perfection of the dedicated life, I shall be happy to see you once more."

The Diary

September, 1751

Abbé Martin was right. I have no vocation. Ah, how weak I am! I adore Francueil! . . .

It is difficult to describe what I have been through during the first days of Francueil's and Rousseau's visit to us. At last Francueil did seem more at his ease with me, but we were never alone together for a moment, and I noticed that he did not make any attempt to speak with me privately. M. Rousseau appears to like him very much, and I feel sure that he already knows all about our affair. They went for long walks together every afternoon, not returning till supper time. Although this behaviour of Francueil's ought to fit in very well with my present frame of mind, I cannot get used to the thought of being avoided by him like this.

Inconceivable as it seems, M. d'Epinay, with utter want of respect for me, his family, or himself, has bought a little house in the village on which he has expended vast sums, and has installed two actresses there, under assumed names, whom he has had the impudence to introduce to M. le Curé as very respectable women.

Mlle Quinault, who had decided to leave Paris and settle at St. Germain, gave a farewell dinner to which she invited Madame d'Epinay.

I have just come back from Mlle Quinault's: she had collected a really very funny assortment of guests. I think that they had all agreed among themselves to keep going from the sublime to the ridiculous. It was a farewell dinner. The rule being that anyone who has once dined with her has the right to come again without further invitation, we ran a risk of finding ourselves a party of fifteen or twenty, whereas the

number invited was only eight. Duclos sets the tone of the party, because few lungs can hold their own with his. Everyone has a nickname, which is usually given as a take-off or show-off, and is not mere friendly fun. Duclos is called "gentle Arbassan," and everyone laughed to hear him so addressed. As I did not in the least understand the joke which I had heard repeated with great success every time I dined with Mlle Quinault, I asked what it meant, and was very surprised to find that no one else knew any more than I did, and that the nickname which for two years had provoked laughter (simply because the mistress of the house laughed at it) had been given just haphazard. My embarrassment and the desire I had shown to probe to the bottom of this joke struck her as exceedingly funny, and they laughed at me for waiting so long before proffering my request for enlightenment. "She must be called Griselda," cried Mlle Quinault, throwing her arms wide and roaring with laughter. They all applauded. Gentle Arbassan looked grave, and there was a something in his approval that suggested that the name had a deeper significance than they knew, and that a better one could not easily be found. The rest thought so too, and "Madame Griselda" I was named.

Mlle Quinault whispered me that an author she knew was to read a society play after dinner, on which he wanted our opinion, and that she was very glad to admit me to the reading, but, I must keep it dark, for she was going to let the rabble leave before the reading began. She forgot that she had just asked me to excuse her bad dinner, which, she said, did not pretend to be more than a meal for true friends, for she could not have us all clearing out as fast as we could, with which she started singing:

"Nous quitterons-nous sans boire?
Nous quitterons-nous
Sans boire un coup?"

After which happy outburst she paid me the little compliment of saying that she wanted to have my opinion on the piece that was to be read, and meanwhile she told me beforehand what I was to say in praise of it. I was inwardly much amused at all I saw, but pretended to applaud all she said as the others did.

When I arrived only Duclos was there, and Rousseau, and two men whom I did not know. "One of these two gentlemen," Mlle Quinault informed me, "makes it his business to go about reciting verses of Voltaire's before they have gone to press: he really thinks his job gives him quite a standing. These sort of bodies are in the know of all the minor doings of the literary world, they are useful in their way. The other is an Abbé, a great trencher-man, a terrific windbag, and a welcome guest in the houses of certain duchesses who think a lot of certain gifts that he possesses in an eminent degree. He has always been very friendly to me, and I had to invite him." I was thanking her for her information when I saw a man come in: he looked simpler and humbler than the rest. "That's the author," Mlle Quinault whispered to me. I looked at him carefully. He seemed to have better brains than he was credited with in that set where they patronise him rather than do him justice. Then a doctor who was very like Molière's caricatures of doctors arrived. Mlle Quinault consulted him as if in all seriousness, and yet made open fun of his answers. I felt uncomfortable on his account at first, until I saw that I could spare myself that concern. He was pedantry, medical affectation and absurdity personified. Dinner was served as soon as Saint-Lambert arrived: he came at last. On that day the magnificent Gobelin tapestries, which are for sale owing to the death of the Duke of . . . were on exhibition at the Grands-Augustins and Mlle Quinault called out, "I bet he's just come from the tapestries."

"You said that in fun," returned Saint-Lambert, "but you've hit the mark. I've been there two hours and I could not tear myself away. Isn't it marvellous the way those huge pictures have been made with woollen threads painted in many colours, and so perfectly executed that at a certain distance it is impossible to tell whether one is looking at a tapestry, or a painting, or even Nature, so wonderfully have the design, colour perspective, the magic of light and shade, in fact the whole art of Vanloo been imitated."

Each said his say on the degree of perfection to which the manufacture of these tapestries had been brought in France. Some preferred Beauvois to the Gobelins, others la Savonnerie, and all were talking at once as we sat down to table. Rousseau tried to make some remark but it was not taken up nor heard, though I thought one thing he said worth attention. He said that as pictures and tapestries were an imitative art, it seemed ridiculous to him to represent, in tapestry, figures with feet resting upon the wainscot. "By all means," said he, "have some small figures in the background, for the perspective, being true, gives one a pleasing impression of reality."

"Well," said I, "I suppose you will not even pardon Poussin for having enclosed his Deluge in a space four feet square."

"That very man is my despair!" said he, "and that picture was the first to put the thought into my head."

"It is the first picture that should have made you forget it," I told him.

As soon as we were all at table, the doctor, whom they called Doctor Akakia, sat with folded arms watching Mlle Quinault, until she began eating her soup, then, catching her in the act, he called indignantly to her, "What about the fifteen grains of rhubarb, Mademoiselle?" Everyone burst out laughing.

"They are packed up, Doctor," said she, "and awaiting me at St Germain." He tried to prove to her that leaving off taking it would not be good for her, and assured us with perfect sincerity that it is better to take useless remedies, and even remedies that do not suit one, than not to take any. He got chaffed to such an extent that at last he saw it himself.

"Messieurs," said he, "I heartily forgive all your hits at me, but surely persons of your intelligence will not let them develop into a thoroughly acrimonious attack upon the first of all the arts? All great men, Messieurs, have respected medical science."

"True," replied Rousseau, "witness Molière."

"Monsieur," answered the doctor, "consider also how he died."

From one joke to another, from one topic to another, the talk returned to the tapestries of the Duc de . . . Mlle Quinault saying that it was a dreadful thing for a family to be compelled to sell such treasures, but that was the fate of all beautiful things and rare collections.

"Hush!" said Duclos, "give the amateurs a chance! Some farmers-general will purchase them and hang them up for all to see before their doors on the day of the little Fête-Dieu."

We then dwelt a little on the beauty and solemnity of that day's ceremony, Mlle Quinault saying to Saint-Lambert, "I wager, Monsieur, that you are crazy on the procession of the little Fête-Dieu."

He exclaimed enthusiastically: "I assure you, Madame, that to me it is wonderfully pathetic. The men, women and children imbued with devotion—the torches—the priests in their magnificent vestments—the silence, broken at intervals, melts me, touches me! I shed tears—I feel myself devout as an angel."

The Abbé called out: "My God, Monsieur, you

make it all so real that I all but started intoning *Tantum ergo.*"

Amid the hubbub and bursts of laughter, Duclos' thunderous voice made itself heard. "You're right," said he to the Marquis, "and they who banished all the outer pomp of ceremony from religion have dealt religion a far harder blow than the philosophers have."

"They were afraid," said Rousseau, "of the people falling into idolatry, and in their anxiety to avoid having a bad religion they paved the way for none at all."

"This august ceremonial was the very reason why paganism lasted so long," put in the author modestly.

"Ah!" said Mlle Quinault, "how beautiful those fêtes were, Marquis."

"How charming for the spectators, Mademoiselle," said Saint-Lambert. "What material for a poet! A crowd of gods! Gods moulded by the hands of Apelles or Praxiteles!"

They passed in review all the gods and their attributes, and all the artists, vieing with one another in vivid and forceful description. One cited Jupiter, thunderbolt in hand, menacing the head of the impious: another saw him with his august head, his locks loose upon his brow, his dark eyebrows at whose slightest movement Olympus trembled: and then Neptune, Thetis, Apollo. I was so sorry that I could not hear and remember all that was said. What I did notice was that the ferment ended with the Abbé spoiling the picture by heavily invoking Venus of the rounded throat and voluptuous smile.

The conversation was once more interrupted, but Saint-Lambert, whose brain was fired, started it afresh: I was shocked by his comparison of paganism and our own religion. "But you see," I said to him, "how powerful must be the influence of our own religion,

since the very philosophers are stirred by the spectacle of a multitude upon their knees in prayer."

"Quite right," said he, "but hard to understand."

Duclos: "Where does this nation keep its reasoning capacity? It scoffs at people of other lands, and yet is more credulous than they."

Rousseau: "I can pardon its credulity, but not its condemnation of those whose credulity differs from its own."

Mlle Quinault observed that in religious matters everyone was right, but that all people should stick to the religion in which they were born.

"No, by God," returned Rousseau warmly, "not if it is a bad religion, for then it can only do much harm."

I bethought myself to say that religion did much good as well, in that it was a curb upon the lower classes who have no other standard of morality. But this they all cried down, and refuted me with arguments which did, as a matter of fact, appear to be better than mine. Someone said that the lower classes were more afraid of being hanged than damned. Saint-Lambert added that it was the business of the Civil and Criminal Code to regulate manners and morals and not that of religion, and that religion, though it took good care to restore a crown at Easter to its servant, had never caused ill-gotten gains to be refunded, nor an usurped province to be restored, nor a calumny atoned for. Saint-Lambert was running on, but "One moment," said Mlle Quinault, "we are here for the purpose of nourishing and sustaining this rag we call the body. Duclos, ring and let us have the joint."

The joint was served. When the servants had gone and the door was shut, Saint-Lambert and Duclos went at it so vigorously that I feared they were for destroying every form of religion: I therefore begged grace for Natural Religion.

" Not more than for the others," said Saint-Lambert.

Rousseau replied that he did not go that far, and that he said with Horace, *Ego sum paulo infirmior*, and that the morality of the Gospels was the one thing in Christianity that he retained because all the ancient religions were based on natural morality.

Saint-Lambert argued the point with him a bit. " Well, leave it at that—but what about a God who gets angry and relents?"

Mlle Quinault: " But tell us, Marquis, are you an atheist?"

His answer annoyed Rousseau, who muttered something: they laughed at him.

Rousseau: " If it is cowardly to allow anyone to speak ill of an absent friend, it is a crime to allow anyone to speak ill of his God Who is present. I believe in God, Messieurs."

" Pascal believed in Him too," I put in.

" You, Monsieur, who are a poet," said I to Saint-Lambert, " will agree with me that every noble enthusiasm is born of a belief in the existence of a Supreme Intelligence, Eternal, All Powerful."

" I agree," he answered, " that it is fine to see this God incline Himself towards the earth and gaze approvingly on Cato's conduct. But, Madame, though this idea, like many another, may in great minds like those of Trajan, Marcus Aurelius, or Socrates flower forth in heroic deeds, it can also be the seed of every conceivable folly."

" Sirs," said Rousseau, " if you say another word I shall leave."

And Rousseau had risen with the definite intention of leaving, when the Prince of . . . was announced.

" Ah! Here he is! Here he is!" cried Mlle Quinault, " here's the handsome Prince, make room for him. He looks like a beautiful Philistine: he's like a beautiful antique." Then, half rising, once

more, resting her two hands on the table, with her elbows sticking up in the air, and her head bent over her plate, she said, with an air of the deepest respect: "My Prince, I am your very humble servant: here is Madame d'Epinay who has done us the honour of sharing our stew. Sit down! La Fleur! Jeanneton! Odious creatures that they are!"

The Prince bowed to me, and we both of us had to laugh at this introduction. He insisted that he would not take anything and dessert was served. He was accompanied by an officer of his regiment who had quite a special gift for reading, reciting, or singing songs and sayings of the common people, and as he had a collection of this literature in his pocket he recited some of it with just the right intonation, gesture and expression, and it was really very amusing. But the contrast between the tone of this sort of thing and that of the preceding conversation jarred on me, and prevented me from enjoying the broad jokes as thoroughly as I should have enjoyed them at another time. However, reciter and recital received much praise. Duclos said it was sublime in its own way, and they dubbed him Corneille of the Gutter, and the praise pleased him well.

They then embarked on a long, dull dissertation on pleasure and happiness, in which only platitudes were uttered and which left the hearers none the wiser as to what they were getting at.

Duclos was the first to evince impatience. "Sirs," said he, "it's absurd to argue about something that everyone can have. We're happy when we want to be or when we can be. I don't see . . ."

"Speak for yourself, who, to be happy, only need bread, cheese, and the first woman who comes along," returned Mlle Quinault.

After much laughter, and some rather free talk, we rose from table and went to the drawing-room. We

all divided up, and I found myself sitting by Rousseau. We were both of us rather abstracted.

"Well?" said he.

"I am distressed," I said, "to think that Saint-Lambert, who is such a cultured, upright man, does not believe in God. I must say I am surprised, for I should have thought that such views were more in Duclos' line than his."

"I cannot stand this mania for tearing down without building up again," said Rousseau.

"Still one cannot deny, Monsieur, that he advanced some very plausible arguments in support of his views."

"What! are you going to agree with him? You had better keep it from me if you do, Madame, for I should be compelled to hate you. Besides, belief in God is necessary for happiness, and I wish you to be happy."

We were interrupted, but I made up my mind to broach the subject again with him in the country, and to get him to tell me what he really thinks, if he can, for it seems to me that he contradicts himself, or is he, possibly, nearer to the Marquis's way of thinking than he says.

Duclos, Rousseau, the Prince, and the Marquis took their leave. Mlle Quinault then proposed that the play should be read. There were only the Abbé, the hawker of Voltaire's works, the old officer, the author and myself left. "Ah! there! now we're by ourselves, let's have the reading," said she. The author was a little put out at only having, for an audience, persons with whom he was not acquainted, and to whose opinion he was indifferent, for he particularly wanted the approbation of those who had just left. He told Mlle Quinault so in a low voice, but she, having apparently no good excuse for her eccentricity, got cross and told him, "Just like you, you keep on telling me, 'It's a secret, a secret.' How am I to know who's

to be let into it or not? Go on, read, read on, for ever, we'll make up for the others: I'll answer for this lot."

The reading went off pretty much as I had expected. We were told what verdict we had to give. I rather impolitely persisted in silence during the weak parts of the piece, and mildly applauded those I liked. The Abbé laughed to order, and, having dined copiously, he fell asleep, laughing. On the whole I liked the play.

It was a day that will give me something to ponder on for quite a while.

The Diary

The day before yesterday I spent the evening with Madame de Poplinière. We were a small party composed of Francueil, Rousseau, and a stranger, a friend of his, named Grimm, of whom I have often heard him speak, and Desmahis, a young writer, the author of a short play that has been a great success. . . . Conversation dragged a little: some talk on French and Italian music was the most interesting. However, I enjoyed listening to M. Grimm. Rousseau and Francueil introduced him to me, saying that he wished to make my acquaintance. He is not a very ready speaker, but he has a pleasing and interesting way of putting things. Rousseau had spoken so enthusiastically of him to me that I noticed him with more curiosity than I usually display in society. I invited him to come and see Rousseau and Francueil when they are at Epinay: he responded politely, but I doubt if he will avail himself of my invitation, for they say he does not like the country.

The Diary *Epinay*

We arrived this morning, Francueil, Rousseau and I. I was so glad to see my mother and my children

once more. Young as my daughter is, she shows signs of decided character, and I think she will be sensitive too. My son, on the other hand, will be weak and easy-going, and, if I am to believe M. Linant, he has every possible fault. I, myself, fancy that Linant's pedantry bores him. Francueil has promised me to give him music and drawing lessons regularly during the three weeks that we are to spend in the country.

I hear that Jelyotte complains bitterly of Madame de Jully's coquetry, she is making him miserable, and he is more in love with her than ever, so they say. I can quite believe that she cares no more about him, for she has hopelessly neglected me of late.

I have just had a very original conversation with M. Rousseau which is well worth noting. It ended with a story that he composed on the spot, and which I thought so excellent that I begged him to write it down.

While Francueil was busy with my son, I went for a walk with Rousseau. "Now why is it," said I, "that I have not seen you at my house for such an age, nor during my stay in Paris?"

"Because when I want to see you, Madame, I like to have you all to myself."

"Do you?"

"Of course I do—where should I come in, in your set? I should cut a poor figure among a lot of artificial persons walking tiptoe in their Sunday best —that's not my style at all."

"What nonsense—when have you seen such people at my house?"

"Eh, but I have, Madame: your sister-in-law (to go no further) with her die-away eyes and her smile of voluptuous disdain: Maurepaire, with his raillery: Madame de Versel, bowing like a devotee to display

her fine neck: Duclos, despotic, cutting and traitorously brusque: Jelyotte, honeyed and bumptious: all of them with a high sense of propriety and without any morals."

"You are very severe, but even more unjust, Monsieur. I should think it quite natural if you took it upon yourself to criticise me, for you have known me for some years and have seen me in the country where I am so informal that it does not take long to get to know me. But, with the exception of Duclos, you have hardly seen the ladies and gentlemen you have mentioned."

"I am only expressing, Madame, the general opinion of them, and certainly what I have seen of them has given me no desire to invent excuses for them."

"Do you know—you make me tremble? I hardly dare ask your opinion of me, though I am longing to know it."

"You can have it, Madame, if it will give you any pleasure. I promise you an equal frankness: and if you are not quite satisfied with yourself as you are, you will be with what I say you can be, if only these ladies and gentlemen will leave you alone: but I can tell you that they would degrade the fairest nature Heaven ever formed."

"Oh, Rousseau, you are talking twaddle! but let us see what you think of me. We'll dismiss my face—I'm not pretty, I know."

"You vary according to your mood—when one catches you full-face, when you are looking down, looking inwardly, you are better than pretty: in the usual way, you have many faces. I gather from those that I know that you have one which I do not know and which may not be the least interesting, but of those I have seen I like the reflective one best."

"That is strange, I should never have thought it: but go on to character, that is what I want to know."

"Perhaps, Madame, I ought to start by telling you what other people think of you, as then you will be better able to judge of the worth of my opinion."

"Certainly—certainly."

"They say you lack character, are good-natured, but insincere, inclined to intrigue, inconstant, fickle, quick-witted, and that you pose as intellectual though you are really only superficial."

"Monsieur, Monsieur, is that what they say of me? It is not possible!"

"Yes, Madame, and although possibly not a word of it is true and I do not believe half of it, it does not surprise me."

"What! You don't believe half of it, Monsieur? If you only knew how different I am from that. To think that they could say such things!"

He laughed: "So you think that you are the first woman to whom injustice has been done?" he asked. "What does it point to? I can tell you. You are good-natured and often taken in; you do not suspect ill-will or deception until you have proof positive: you are always wavering as to what you ought or ought not to do, and what with being hesitating and contradictory in all you do and say, and what with your mortal dread of offending or wounding others, you appear insincere and lacking in character."

"But what am I to do to avoid giving this impression, for what you have just said is true."

"Ah, that's not so easy, and I am reminded of a remark once made to me by a friend of mine, whose character in point of weakness is rather like your own. He is (apart from that) a man of most distinguished merit, a transcendent genius, who has not his match in this century. He is Diderot. I said to him one day, 'But how is it that you, with your easy-going temperament, which induces you to spend half your life making blunders, and carefully keeping them dark,

and the other half in patching them up, do not frequently appear insincere.'

"'Simply because I am neither true nor false,' said he, 'but transparent.' He is open, and you, Madame, are true but not open."

"Yes, and again, that is true. But, Monsieur, intriguing, now! Surely not?"

"All the same, from over-anxiety to do what is right, and often from a desire to avoid taking credit for it, or rather from fear of failing in your good intentions, you take a roundabout course, instead of making straight for your aim."

"That is very odd."

"As for pose and superficiality, there they misjudge you. On the contrary, there is a good deal of simplicity about you. In spite of having read a lot, and learnt a lot, you are ignorant, because you have read in the wrong way without method or selection. Your thoughts are the fruit of your own good brains rather than of your reading. You have no clear-cut ideas or principles in your head: but how could you have acquired any, living in a world that has none?"

"I have formed them for myself: it seems to me that they exist independently of education, in the heart of every decent person, and from them he never departs."

"Madame, you are fortunate in being able to think so."

"As for my brains, I think they are good, but my mind is slow, reflective and disconnected."

"That statement is not incorrect but hardly, I think, quite true. You are, for instance, a good mother, but so far you have loved your friends for themselves and your children for yourself, for your feeling for the latter is in proportion to the pleasure they give you: still, that will not last. You are courageous, high-minded, virtuous in a way, and if you will only surround yourself with decent people, I can tell you that

you will some day be a very fine woman: but I am not going to tell you that people will speak any better of you for that."

"As long as my friends do me justice, and my heart knows itself not unworthy of their esteem, all will be well."

"Quite right."

"But you, in your turn, are you not going to ask me what I think of you?"

"Perhaps, Madame, I do not care to know."

"Oh well, I do not mind your indifference. But, by the way, do you know I also rather liked the way you went for Saint-Lambert the other day. All the same, I was very much puzzled for the rest of the day."

"I expect you were: there are some prejudices imbibed so early and so enrooted in our souls that it is difficult to get rid of them. They are so universally accepted, and proclaimed so constantly and so effectively, not only by men but by the wonders of Nature, ceaselessly renewed before our eyes, that one can hardly refuse credence to such an array of proof, the animal world, plants, fruits of the earth, rain, the seasons."

"Still it worried me, yet I think Saint-Lambert had the best of it. . . ."

"Madame, sometimes in the corner of my little room, sitting with my head in my hands, or in the deep darkness of night, I think as he does. But see yonder" (said he, pointing with one hand towards the sky, his head uplifted, his face inspired), "when sunrise disperses the mists that curtain the earth, and unfolds before me the sparkling and wonderful panorama of Nature, the mists of my mind are dispelled as well: I recover my faith in God, my belief in Him. I marvel before Him, I adore Him, I am prostrate in His presence."

"But, Monsieur, if you who have so great a leaning

towards belief, have your moments of doubt, others must certainly have theirs also. And that being so, I should feel, if I may say so, more confidence in your intellectual conviction than in that which resulted from the evidence of your eyes. Tell me truly, you who have meditated often on this matter, you who have all manner of knowledge that I can never hope to attain, tell me where you would look for the most direct proof."

"Madame, our lights are so limited, it is hardly possible to say. Shall I tell you a story?"

"Ah! you are going to answer me with a story! All right, please tell it me!"

He thought for a moment, then began as follows: "Once upon a time a man was cast ashore on a strange land—a land peopled with men and women of every cast of countenance, and of all ages. He gazed upon the different objects that attracted his attention and looked amid the throng for someone who could inform him as to the laws and customs of the land, for he liked the place and desired to abide there. Seeing three long-bearded men who were sitting apart, talking, he went up to them and said, 'Messieurs, be so kind as to tell me where I am and to whom this land belongs. If the manners and customs of the inhabitants are on a par with the wisdom and method that I observe even in the village of the land, your ruler must be one of the greatest and best of princes.'

"'Nothing is easier than to gratify your curiosity,' replied one of the old men to the stranger: 'you are in the Kingdom of the Benevolent Genius, who dwells yonder on the opposite coast. You were cast on this shore willy-nilly, and by his command, for he has a passion for making people happy and to this end he causes strangers to be shipwrecked. Those who are not drowned he takes under his protection, and shuts them up for a certain period in this country that you

so rightly admire. These gentlemen and I are his ministers, commissioned by him to instruct his subjects in his will and see that they observe the laws he imposes, under pain of penalty or hope of award.'

"'But, Messieurs, since this country is so beautiful, why does he not dwell among his subjects, and what is he doing yonder?'

"'He is relieved from the necessity of showing himself as we are his deputies,' answered the old man, 'we are directly inspired by the Genius. But you must be told the conditions.'

"'Conditions!' said the stranger. 'Did you not say that I am here by the will of the Genius, and that I had no say in the matter?'

"'True,' said the old man.

"'Then it is absurd to talk to me of conditions,' replied the stranger, 'since I am not at liberty to accept or refuse them.'

"'Not at liberty!' returned the old man, 'what blasphemy! Disabuse yourself of that mistaken idea, and quickly.'

"'Let him talk,' interposed his companion in a low voice, 'and beware of believing in liberty yourself, or you will offend the great kindness of the Spirit.'

"'Moreover, Monsieur,' continued the first speaker, in a modest, caressing manner, 'before proceeding further, let me tell you that I should be addressed as Monseigneur, for such is the will of the Benevolent Genius who has appointed me to see that his orders are carried out. There is but one man in the whole country above us three.'

"The stranger knew not what to think of three apparently sensible men—to judge from their bearing, age and respect shown them,—calmly talking such wild nonsense.

"While they were talking they heard a great noise, in which cries of both pain and joy were intermingled:

the stranger, surprised and curious, asked what the matter was. 'From time to time,' replied the third old man, 'the Genius to test his subjects' fortitude, permits them to be done to death, while they, with dying lips extol his goodness, mercy and justice. This honour is reserved for those he loves best. Of course all his subjects are equally bound to believe him perfect, for they are pledged to that in their first sleep.'

"'What, Monseigneur! You take oaths in your country in your sleep?' cried the stranger.

"'It is the rule,' replied the old man, 'and you yourself took the oath when you were cast on this shore."

"'I—took an oath! I'll be hanged if I can make head or tail of this,' returned the stranger.

"'You are none the less pledged,' returned the Minister, 'and this is how the ceremony, without which you could not be regarded as a citizen of the island, was carried out. As soon as we hear that a stranger has arrived in our country, we go to receive him: then we pick out two of our citizens, all of whom are expected to be thoroughly versed in our laws, our manners and customs, and they are made to stand on either side of the stranger, who, as he lies asleep upon the ground, is questioned and told the conditions on which he may become a citizen of the island: the two sponsors take the oath for him by which he promises to conform all his days to the beliefs and law of the land.'

"'You are making game of me,' replied the stranger wrathfully. 'And to what, if you please, do you make me out to be pledged?'

"'Well,' said the old man, 'among other things, to believe that the Genius is full of justice and kindness, for he loves his subjects and only causes them to be unhappy for their good, or through their own fault or someone else's; to believe that his heart is closed to

passion and that the wrath he manifests is not really wrath at all, and his sorrow and his seeming joy are also non-existent, for his soul has attained to such perfection that it can only be perturbed in semblance or figuratively speaking. An abridged list of the rest of your obligations is contained in the twelve folio volumes with which I now present you, and which you must learn by heart at your leisure. But know that if you misinterpret a single word, you are lost beyond all hope of mercy.'

The seriousness with which all this was told him made the stranger think for an instant that either the brains of the old men or his own brain had turned. He left them, went about the town, and received the same information from various other persons.

"As it was impossible to get away from the island, he decided to do pretty much as others did, though at heart he could not bring himself to believe a word of what he had been told to believe. One day, fatigued after a long walk, he sat down in a little boat on the shore, and letting his mind drift, said to himself, 'It's all a myth—there's no opposite coast—this vast expanse of water is bounded by the sky-line—I can see it.' As he gazed and mused, he fell asleep, and while he slept a fresh wind arose, which stirring sea and boat, bore him insensibly to the opposite shore. He did not wake till he had got there.

"'Goodness!' said he, 'now at last I shall see this weird Genius,' and he set about looking for him.

"He scoured the island from end to end, and finally found him, or maybe he did not find him, for I'm bound to admit that versed as I am in tales of travel, I would not like to vouch for their entire veracity; anyway, if he found him, he doubtless said to him: 'Monsieur Genius, if you only knew what they say of you on the other side I think you would laugh heartily over it, and indeed I am not to

blame in that I have been unable to credit a word of what I have been told you have done for me, and that I even doubted your very existence, for all I was told was so absurd that it was impossible to believe it.' The Spirit probably smiled at the stranger's frankness, and in majestic, mocking accents replied, 'Little it matters, my friend, whether you, or the like of you, believe or do not believe in my existence. Be easy. Besides, neither for your good nor for your ill have you dwelt in and explored these lands, for once a person finds himself on the road on which you were, he is bound to pass through them, for the way leads nowhere else. For the same reason the current carried you hither. Apropos of this I could,' he probably added, 'give you some very illuminating information, but you must know, my child, that I have something better to do than teach a young scaramouch like you. Go, and settle in some corner, and leave me in peace, till time and need dispose of you afresh. Good evening.'

"The stranger as he retired must have said to himself, 'I knew quite well that if there was a Genius on that shore he would be good and kind, and easy to deal with. Anyhow, there is nothing like being honest with oneself, if one would avoid self-deception.'"

"That does indeed seem to me very essential," I said to him, "but it is equally important I think, to be in harmony with oneself."

"You are right, Madame, but that one never can be: the great point is to know one's own inconsistencies, and to keep those which are the most conducive to happiness: that is the royal road to the acquirement of a well-balanced mind and a contented heart. But what I have told you is only a story; don't attach more importance to it than it deserves."

"But why? I did like it so very much."

"Generally speaking, Madame, when an idea or

notion is vague and when one cannot quite prove that it is false, one had better stick to it, especially if it helps one to do what is right and proper."

"But, Monsieur, that is exactly what the idea in question does not do at all, as was, for instance, so very clearly proved the other day."

"Anyway, you won't deny that it consoles the afflictions that are so common in this world."

"What! But you are going far beyond the existence of God and Natural Religion. You are going back on what you said the other day: now you are admitting punishment and reward, and revealed religion in all its forms."

"Madame, it is one of those inconsistencies so conducive to our happiness."

"I have no more to say. I see you only make use of religion as one of a series of illusions, but I think there are others of a more cheerful and pleasing character."

"If I knew of one more comforting, I should adopt it: but where can I turn for one that would provide us, as this does, with just and true testimony of our good deeds. It gives us length of days in its promise of a better and infinite existence; it inspires pity for the wicked and for the fate he lays up for himself."

"Yes, and makes us cruel towards the good man for whom it appoints a hell in this world."

"Does it not promise him an eternal reward for his good deeds? It lessens the horror of the tomb: it detaches us from life which we are bound to lose—often—at the very time when, but for that, it were most dear to keep. It gives us the promise of seeing once more the friends we have lost."

"A most attractive hope were it well founded."

"Above all, it enables us to endure the irksome and abominable inflictions of the great of the earth, who, in cold blood, without a qualm, for a freak or frivolity,

will bring despair and want upon many thousands of men, men whom it is their duty to render happy. Mine is not a ferocious nature, but when I see no justice in the world for these monsters, I like to think there is a hell for them. And who knows how far they would go if they did not believe in a hell? For such as they this fear is needful, not for the people, as you were saying the other day. True or false, it awaits them at the last: having lived scoundrels, it is well they should die despairing. Let us not deny ourselves this vengeance—little enough, but all we shall get out of them. For the rest, Madame, I must confess that I do not care for public discussions of this kind. I utterly disliked that dinner of Mlle Quinault's. Of all who brayed there, the Marquis was the only one who said what he really thought. There was more of mannerism than of conviction in what was said. Eh, why the devil proclaim a disbelief when you are not quite sure of being able to support your theory. I would like to peer into the depths of the souls of the obstinately Godless when they come to die, and I am sure that I should very often see there a trouble, distress, fear, that their outward calm cannot quite disguise. I wish to live as a good man and a good Christian because I wish to die in peace, and also because this desire in no way upsets the tenor of my life and soothes me with hope against the time when I shall be no more. Faith, 'tis an ill service you render a man who has suffered from stone in the bladder all his days, to tell him that he need look for no compensation for a misfortune, chronic and undeserved."

"That is all quite right," said I, "but I like your story best and shall stick to it."

M. Grimm came with Rousseau to see me yesterday, and I asked him to come to dinner the next day. I liked him very much, he is pleasant and polite. I think he is shy, for he seemed too clever for the

awkwardness noticeable in him to be due to anything else. He is passionately fond of music, and he, Francueil, Rousseau and I had music all the afternoon. I showed him some of my own compositions, which he appeared to like. If there was one thing I did not like in him it was his exaggerated praise of my talents which as I know, only too well, is undeserved. He is not well off. He has no private income: his literary, artistic and scientific tastes have brought him into close contact with Count Schomberg, whose children he accompanied to Paris. He was then twenty-nine, and is now thirty-four. Because of his great friendship with Count de Friese and Count Schomberg he has decided to settle in France, where he will devote himself entirely to literary work. He lives with Count de Friese who, as you know, has been appointed Major-General. M. Grimm hopes to make some sort of a living by his pen. He is said to be quite unambitious. Rousseau and he seem to have the greatest veneration for M. Diderot. They spoke of him with such admiration that I long to know him. I have often heard him referred to as a man of genius before, and his name is often coupled with Voltaire's. These gentlemen declare that he is an infinitely deeper thinker, but it was of his character that they chiefly waxed enthusiastic. M. Grimm said that he was the most perfectly moral man he knew. I think they praise him so to me just to make me the more sorry that I cannot meet him, for they made out that he is as difficult—only in a different way—to get at as Rousseau. They are going to lend me his works, and then, at any rate, I shall see what I think of him intellectually.

Three days later when Madame d'Epinay dined with Madame de Jully she was told, by her sister-in-law, when the other guests had left, that she had now tired of Jelyotte, and had taken another lover, the Chevalier de V——.

At supper at Madame de Jully's they spoke of a poor novel which had come out and which I began and did not finish, because it is detestable. Some of the company praised it, and said it was by Diderot. Going by what I had heard from Francueil, Rousseau and M. Grimm, I indignantly protested. "For shame," said I, "the book is stupid, its tone is bad, and hardly suggestive of refinement in its author. It cannot be ascribed to Diderot, who is upright and virtuous. . . ."

"Upright, virtuous," cried one of the guests. "An irreligious man, a turbulent-minded body who would set the kingdom ablaze."

"He!" I cried, and they practically one and all replied, "Yes, most certainly, he is a revolutionary, an atheist. . . ."

"Well, if he is, though I don't believe it," said I, "that's no reason why he should write a bad novel. What an illogical deduction."

The word illogical sent them into terrific fits of laughter. That all these "cockchafers"[1]—to use Duclos' term—should have talked such nonsense without knowing what nonsense it was, would not have surprised me, but that a Duke and the Chevalier V——, who are sensible men, should have talked so did surprise me. If, as they say, this is the opinion held of M. Diderot at Court, I can only say that it is utterly different from that held by Rousseau and M. Grimm.

[1] Giddy-pates, empty-headed people.

CHAPTER VII

1752–1754

Madame d'Epinay discontinued her diary for three years during the absence of M. de Lisieux. He, on his return, pestered her to give him at least an abridged account of the happenings during the interval, and she therefore strung together some "fragments" in which she noted—"one trouble after another, discord and unfairness, disgust of life, and yet at the same time a longing to be happy, which I do believe we carry with us all our days, and never realise."

The first of the "troubles" was the death of her cousin, Madame de Maupeou; the second, the further defection of Francueil. From Duclos she learnt that Francueil and her husband shared the Mesdemoiselles Rose, the one having the elder and the other the younger sister. She and Francueil therefore had a rumpus, but Gauffecourt acted as mediator, and Francueil wrote that he would give up visiting the abode of the Roses, and was received again, but merely as a friend.

"Some time afterwards (she wrote) M. d'Epinay said to me one evening before Madame de Jully, 'No one knows what's become of Francueil, he's never at Rose's now. It was Duclos who planted him there: do you know who has drawn him away?' 'Common decency, Monsieur,' answered Madame de Jully, 'and a sense of what is due to all of us.' That shut him up, but five minutes afterwards he came out with, 'There's nothing to be said to that,

ladies, that settles it: you are such excellent judges,' and he went off bursting with laughter."

She often saw the Chevalier de Valory and sometimes Mlle d'Ette: they were now having shocking quarrels.

The Diary

Madame de Jully has been a great comfort to me: she is totally changed in behaviour but is still as amusing as ever. All the same, as she has never read, nor thought, and has no guiding principles save those with which her own upright nature has endowed her, she is still, on many occasions, more flighty and heedless than is considered permissible for a woman. We hardly see anything of M. de Jully, who leads a most dissipated life and seems wholly detached from his wife. He now dotes on pictures, sculptures and antiques, as he formerly did on diamonds and jewellery.

M. Grimm has returned from Germany, and I have been seeing him on and off ever since and like him more and more, but he so exclusively confines himself to two sets of friends to whom he is absolutely devoted, that he has little time for making fresh friends. He is an intimate friend of Diderot and Rousseau. Three times a week he dines with his compatriot and friend Baron d'Holbach. Desmahis is also one of their set but he is not much with them, as their parties usually consist of older men. He comes to see me fairly often. He is young and very talented and amusing in conversation, but I do not think there is much depth in his thought. He should have a future before him through his writings, if he chooses to work, but unfortunately he never sticks to anything. He is undecided, restless, and maybe a trifle diffident.

I have heard occasionally from Madame d'Houdeto whom her husband leaves in his Normandy estate, although the family clamour for her return. At last, two

You need to know M. Grimm intimately to estimate his worth. Only his friends can appreciate him because he is only truly himself with them. With them his manner is quite different and he blossoms out into humour, gaiety, openness, and constraint and unsociability vanish.

They say that this is all that can be got out of him in a lifelong friendship, and that his naturally reserved soul, broken by sorrow, prevents him from being as expansive with his friends as such a character as his would lead one to expect. He listens to all they have to say and answers with the greatest interest so long as they never speak about himself—it is the one thing in which he fails them. He is perhaps unique in having the gift of inspiring confidence without giving any, but he proves to his friends, by the way he trusts them and by his responsiveness to their affection, that mistrust and indifference have nothing to do with the reserve for which they reproach him. It is also said of him that, while incapable of any pretence with friends, he has the gift of telling the straightest home-truths with no less gentleness and tact than plainness. No one is more clear-sighted where others' affairs are concerned, nor gives better advice. He can point out what ought to be done but cannot do it himself: no one is shrewder in seeing through other people's schemes nor a worse hand at bringing his own plans to a successful issue. That unsociable, shy streak in him does not combine with the ease, suppleness, dexterity which are needful in all business transactions, and which are only acquired by great worldly experience.

From this sketch you will see that M. Grimm is not everyone's idea of an amiable man. Who then is the amiable man? Until someone can give me a definition, I hope I shall meet many as grumpy as M. Grimm.

F. M. GRIMM
(*Carmontelle*)

[*face p.* 160

The Diary

Madame de Jully fell ill with pox and died after an illness of five days. She was only twenty-three. "It's young to die—isn't it?" she said as she bade Madame d'Epinay good-bye, and asked her to console the Chevalier. Just before she died she gave her sister-in-law a little key. "It's the key," she said, "it's . . ." They were her last words. Madame d'Epinay, the quick-witted and kind-hearted, guessed that it was the key of the little desk where Madame de Jully used to keep the Chevalier's letters. Seizing the first chance, she opened the desk, extracted all the papers and hastily burnt them, without examination. She gave the key to M. de Jully.

M. de Jully sat with his mother-in-law in a stupefaction of grief. They bade Madame d'Epinay see to the arrangement and disposal of her sister-in-law's personal effects. When M. de Jully roused himself his first act was to order a superb mausoleum which was to be placed in a room in his suite of apartments, and he had copies of his wife's portraits put all round his room. Madame d'Epinay quotes from a letter written by Rousseau to Francueil:

"He (M. de Jully) is not content with having his wife's portrait all over the place, but has had a room built to contain a superb marble mausoleum with a bust of Madame de Jully and an inscription in Latin verse which is, indeed, very pathetic and very beautiful. But, you know, Monsieur, suppose a clever artist were in like case; really he would, probably, be quite sorry to have his wife back again. Art is a very despotic mistress—none more so, perhaps. It would not surprise me if a man, and a good man too but who had the gift of eloquence, were to long sometimes for a mighty sorrow to depict. If this statement strikes you as crazy, just think it over a bit, and it

will not seem so mad. Meanwhile, I am quite certain that there is no tragic poet who would not be very sorry, had no great crime ever been committed, and who has not said in his heart, when reading the lives of Nero, Semiramis, Aedipus, Phedre and Mohamet, 'What a subject I should have missed if these ruffians had not set tongues wagging!' Eh! Messieurs, you friends of the Arts, you would have me love a thing that makes men feel thus! Well, I'll do so—but on the condition that you can prove to me that a fine statue is better than a fine deed, that a beautifully written scene is better than right feeling, and in short that a piece of canvas painted by Vanloo is better than virtue."

Madame d'Epinay wrote to her guardian mentioning the loss of certain business papers relating to some business transactions between M. d'Epinay and his brother, and which (as Madame d'Epinay remembered) Madame de Jully had in her care. Unfortunately a wretched chamber-maid, discontented with the portion of her mistress's wardrobe which Madame d'Epinay had allotted to her, informed the family that Madame d'Epinay had gone by herself into her sister-in-law's little room and when afterwards she (the maid) had gone there she found the fireplace full of burnt papers. A most frightful family row ensued: all Madame de Jully's relations attacked Madame d'Epinay and M. de Jully, who did not believe his sister-in-law guilty of deliberately destroying these particular papers, could not stop their tongues. M. d'Epinay roared with laughter at his wife's distress and said whether she had done it on purpose or not "it was a capital trick to play" (for it suited him that the papers which related to money he owed his brother should be lost).

The affair of the missing papers became public and was the talk of the place. Duclos did not believe that she had not destroyed the papers deliberately.

Rousseau expressed no opinion until she asked him for one, and then he said: "What would you have me say? I come, I go, and all I hear and see fills me with indignation and disgust. I see some who are obviously ill-intentioned and yet so clever in their unjust dealings, while others who are well meaning are so muddling and dull-witted that I am tempted (and not for the first time) to look on Paris as a den of rogues into whose clutches every traveller in turn falls. But what gives me the worst impression of Society is the hurry people are in to excuse themselves on the grounds that everyone else is in the same boat. As for giving credit for a good deed, by God, they would be very unwilling to believe such a thing possible."

Then suddenly Madame d'Epinay learnt that M. Grimm had been wounded in a duel fought in her defence. At a dinner given by the Count de Friese the Epinay scandal was the topic of conversation, and M. Grimm, indignantly protesting against the calumny, provoked another guest, with the result that a duel took place in the garden. Duclos told Madame d'Epinay that everyone would now say that Grimm was her lover, and she would be most foolish if she saw more of him. She replied that she intended to see much more of him.

Letter from Madame d'Epinay to M. de Lisieux

I have just had quite a sharp altercation with Duclos, Rousseau, Gauffecourt and the Chevalier de Valory. Just imagine, they came into my room, laughing like madmen. I asked them what they were laughing at. "Oh, nothing," said Duclos, "the four of us were out for a walk when this deuce of a fellow Rousseau, who never has a good word for anyone, took it into his head to say, apropos of something or other, that your sister-in-law's mausoleum (which is, by the way,

quite a magnificent thing) was a most happy idea as a form of consolation, for M. de Jully will derive a far greater solace from the discussion of its beauties than in shedding tears for his wife. And what reason do you suppose he gave for that statement? The dominating obsession that Art is. 'All right,' said he, 'let's go and call on him. I wager that, when the praises of the deceased have been sung, you will behold proof of what I say.' On that, I accepted his wager, Madame, and we set off. As yet your brother-in-law has only the model on a small scale at his house. It was really so pathetic at first that I thought I had won. But gradually he dropped his mourner's rôle, and bade us note such-and-such beauties, the admirable contour, and this and that, and finally behold the man a thousand times more artist than widower. I turned to Rousseau, and upon my honour, I said aloud, 'Let's go, my friend, you've won.' That's what we were laughing at, Madame."

The missing papers fortunately turned up. They had been handed by Madame de Jully to the Chevalier de Valory, who had passed them on to one M. Félix.

M. de Jully hastened to offer Madame d'Epinay an apology on the part of those from whom an apology was due, though, as he said, he had never for a moment suspected her.

He said to her: "Sister, would you care to know what I have been thinking?"

"What, brother?"

"My wife knew practically nothing of business, nor of the value of money. I was wondering whether, when she asked you to burn, indiscriminately, whatever was there, it was with the idea of destroying some possible source of dispute and . . ."

"Brother, she was too level-headed to have any such foolish idea—think of the consequences!"

"I was supposing that she had not thought of them. But what was it that she wished to have burned so hurriedly?"

"I have no idea at all, brother. I burnt everything without looking at it."

"You have no suspicions?"

"No, brother."

"Could she have had any love-affair? But it is so unlikely, isn't it?"

"Madame de Jully did much good, brother. It is quite likely that she wished to destroy any record of her charities."

"I believe that was it. You think so too?"

"In my opinion, it is our only permissible suspicion, and with that we must rest content."

He sighed and went away.

I have, at last, seen M. Grimm, my dear Guardian. He came yesterday to my mother's, while I was there. When he was announced, we went to meet him. After the first greetings, which were most respectful on his part, "My daughter," said my mother, "embrace your knight!"

"I should be very proud of the title, did I deserve it," he replied, "but I simply championed the cause of loving-kindness in general, but, truly," he added, looking at me, "never was that virtue more unjustly outraged."

CHAPTER VIII

1754–1755

Letter from Madame d'Epinay to M. de Lisieux

YESTERDAY we had Rousseau and M. Grimm with us. The former has been spending the last four days with Baron d'Holbach who has just lost his wife. They say that the Baron feels her loss terribly and is in the depths of grief. He was happy but now is happy no more. M. Grimm, who has come up from the country, is going to travel with him. They will be away for three months. It is just what anyone who knew M. Grimm would have expected of him, and I think the more of him for it. But I cannot bear to have people whose companionship is such a pleasure to me leading this wandering life. I said to him, "But who will now be my knight, Monsieur, if I am attacked in your absence?"

"The same as before, Madame, your own past life," he answered. And now he has gone.

Rousseau has settled down here and will only go to Paris just to see his friend Diderot. I suggested that he should bring him here to see us, but he made out that he is so unsociable that he dared not even risk the suggestion. What a pity it is that men of genius, and such an eminent man as M. Diderot is said to be, should enwrap themselves in their philosophy and disdain the homage that people in any circle of Society that they would honour with their presence would be only too eager to pay them.

Countess d'Houdetot is coming to spend a week with us. I think the relations between her and M. de Saint-Lambert are intimate, in fact very intimate

indeed: she talks of no one but him and quotes no one else. She raves about him so much and so openly that the Count's nose may well be out of joint. She declares that he is dying to be introduced to me—not a very sudden attack, since he has known me for two years past, and has never said a word about it to me. Anyway, she is to bring him. I am curious to see them both together. Duclos thinks a lot of the Marquis, but is not so favourably impressed by M. Grimm, whose only good point, so he says, is his passion for music, and his only talent that of praising up the heavy beauties of his native literature.

A charming little incident occurred of which I must tell you. Last Sunday I sent my son to spend the afternoon with his sister who was a little unwell: they amused themselves with writing me a letter that the little girl dictated and which my son, who also put in his bit, wrote. The letter was handed to me by the post-boy as I was walking on the terrace, and they, from their window, watched to see what effect the great event would have on me. On seeing the post-boy, I felt anxious for a moment, but the letter made me laugh. It was neither badly nor well done. I had my desk and a chair brought to me, and wrote them a reply in which, after joking and thanking them for guessing that I was thinking of them, I touched rather more seriously on various matters relating to themselves and myself, and while only intending to reply in four words, I replied in four pages. Their wild delight, on the reception of this letter, was killingly funny, in fact it was rather too much for Pauline. But their reply to the letter is the thing to see—it is really most original. Their governess assures me that she did not help them, and she is incapable of telling me an untruth, besides she knows well how I dislike any little traps for maternal pride.

I think that M. d'Epinay might very well come and

see us a little more frequently. It was discovered, when they were examining the big château, that the whole of the foundations, on one side, would have to be under-pinned. He wishes to take this opportunity of enlarging the house and adding a square pavilion to the two extremities of the frontage. It is a mad idea, but up to a certain point I am disinclined to oppose it, for it will give him something to do and keep him at home. And as it is written that he shall be eternally doing something foolish, he had better be doing it at home than elsewhere. At any rate the rooms will remain for his children. He says that he will not have any superfluous decoration and no gilding —just a handsome, simple, convenient addition on either side is his idea.

I, too, have a plan which I must tell you of. It came to me when I saw how pleased my children were to get my letters. My idea is to write them a letter now and again, and, in the form of a game with them, impart precepts and lessons which will leave in their minds correct ideas on the principal points of morality. I think this will be better for them than the work I had commenced, which is dry and didactic. I wrote two letters which I intended to address to my son, and I consulted Rousseau about them. I send them to you, together with his verdict upon them, which I asked him to write down for me. I confess to you that, while I agree with his principles, I do not consider them applicable to my letters, and I shall not come to the conclusion that my letters are as bad as he says they are, unless you also say the same. It is true that I have not re-read them, but I know them almost by heart. I send them to you, together with Rousseau's letter.[1] I must say that I got the idea for the

[1] These letters are given in the appendix to the 1818 edition of Madame d'Epinay's Memoirs, and are included in the text of Boiteau's (later) edition.

second letter to my son, one day when Madame Darty drifted in to see us. She has become very religious and picks holes in all and sundry, but her sister, whom she had brought with her, was too terribly complimentary for anything. The child noticed it, and that set me thinking. I impatiently await your comments. Good-bye to you, my very kind, my very indulgent friend. I do indeed often feel very sorry for you when I think of how I presume upon your friendship.

In her next letter she told M. de Lisieux that her husband, who was now in a terrific state of excitement over the repairs to the château, had shown her a piece of English lace and asked what she thought he ought to give for it. She said it would be cheap at 100 francs a yard. He presently told her that he got it for 88 livres, and added:

"Little Rose has a birthday ten days hence, and I must give her something, so this shall be my birthday present to her." Madame d'Epinay (who had thought the lace was destined for herself) could hardly believe her ears on receiving this peculiar confidence. "Don't you think it is a nice present?" he asked.

"I am no judge of what is 'nice' in this connection," she replied.

The Diary

December, 1754

I need not tell you how very pleased I was to see M. Grimm again. Daily I find his company more agreeable, although I am sometimes tempted to be a little vexed with him for being so silent. He only likes talking *tête-à-tête*, and never seems to care about bringing others round to his way of thinking. His principles are somewhat different from those of our illustrious wind-bags. For instance, he does not care a rap for what others think of him unless their

opinion is in accordance with his own inner conviction. He says that there is no man who could not be his own judge if he really wished to be, and that nothing is more harmful to young folk than the habit of pouring out the tale of the faults and errors into which they have fallen to the first person who displays friendship or sympathy for them. This heedless gush imperceptibly destroys all modesty and that shame with which vice should inspire them. I must confess that his own behaviour and reserve have made me conscious of something that might not otherwise have struck me. I have thought that, seeing how contemptible M. d'Epinay has rendered himself in my eyes, I could, with a clear conscience, leave him to himself, and that I could hardly make it too plain that we lead our separate lives. M. Grimm's deferential attitude when we happened to speak of M. d'Epinay —the way he insisted on the consequent harm to my children if they got an inkling of my opinion of their father, his apparent certainty that I could either stem the tide of my husband's downfall, or even pull him up again, made me think seriously about my children's future. I blushed inwardly for not having sufficiently realised that by so openly showing my contempt for my husband, I might be doing them an injury, and I resolved to behave more prudently. Such is the result of intercourse with those whose principles are too well rooted to be shifted daily to suit their owner's plans or convenience.

Madame d'Epinay complained to her guardian of Duclos, who had begun to interfere with her friendship with M. Grimm, who, so he said, was in love with her, and of whom he also said that he was a nobody and subsisted on the fancy a courtier and a pedant had taken to him, and that he always did the devoted to anyone who was willing to help him on. Duclos

could not stand her calling Grimm "her knight", and told her that Grimm was in love with Mlle Fel, who would not have him, and so she (Madame d'Epinay) would only have her leavings.

The Diary

I dined to-day at my mother's where there were M. Grimm, M. Gauffecourt and Rousseau. Duclos came after dinner and did not stop. I think he only came to find out if I saw M. Grimm yesterday, or to make out that he and I were in some secret together.

He took me aside to say, "Did you see him yesterday?"

"Who?"

"Why, my God, that man," indicating Grimm.

I was weak enough to answer his question, and what was worse, tell him a lie, for I assured him that I had not seen him, though I had really spent a couple of hours with him. "Take care," he added, "I have made some terrible discoveries: go gently: you always go too fast. I'll see you one of these days and will tell you all." He departed after this warning, which worried me for a minute or two.

However, Madame d'Epinay had the courage to tackle M. Grimm direct. His reply was simple, straightforward and explicit.

"I admit," he said, "that I was as passionately in love with her as a man can possibly be with any woman. I believed for a time that she was attentive to my suit, but probably it was my vanity that led me to think so. I saw that I was mistaken and nearly died of grief: but on that occasion she treated me with such harshness, haughtiness and lack of feeling that I was cured of my love once and for all. I can pardon anything —even to a friend's faithlessness: but I cannot pardon

contempt. I should have a poor opinion of myself and should consider that I was lacking in self-respect were I ever again to see a person who had treated me with contempt."

The Diary

How abominable Duclos is ! I can't believe a word of what he says of M. Grimm, and yet I am unable, inconceivable as it seems, to put it right out of my head.

When he came to see me to-day, M. Grimm was with me. When M. Grimm left, Duclos seized the opportunity of telling me that I should damage my good name irretrievably were I to take up M. Grimm and throw over Francueil. The expressions he uses are no longer delicate or decent.

" I am not taking anyone up nor throwing anybody over,"I said shortly, "my one desire is to have and keep such friends as I can esteem, and who will let me alone."

" Ah, my God," he answered, " you'll have plenty and to spare of such friends, but I'm not the one to hold my tongue when I see your welfare and reputation at stake. Do as you please, approve or disapprove—it's all the same to me, but I shall have done my part as an honest friend. I shall speak out and state my mind publicly—I warn you. Yes, I shall say I've warned you and that I've nothing to reproach myself with. But—the deuce—if you're too far gone in love and have got your head turned, it's no fault of mine, and I wash my hands of the business. . . ."

" But you are presuming something devoid of common sense and you dare . . ."

" Eh ! my God—if it's so untrue why won't you listen to it then ? "

" Because I dislike hearing evil everlastingly spoken of those I admire and trust as they deserve."

"Yes, Mlle d'Ette, for instance? I was wrong, I suppose, in telling you to beware of that creature."

"My God—that's very different."

"You'll drive me silly, Madame, I tell you that Grimm is an artful, wily, insinuating humbug. I forgive you for being blind to it all, for it is next door to impossible to suspect it, it takes *me* to see through him. I have proofs clearer than daylight. He's in love with you—you won't admit it."

"I swear, Monsieur, that no one could possibly have evinced more esteem, attachment, and even affectionate sympathy for anyone than he has shown towards me —that I can certainly say—but never has he uttered a single word of love."

"My God, I can well believe that—not a word of love! I bet he hasn't. He's too clever for that, the rascal: he wants to bind you first and have you in his clutches. Yes, yes, that all agrees with what I know of him. He is strict, isn't he, in his principles?"

"No one more so, and consistent, which you have omitted to mention."

"Oh, that's another thing! Time, Time will show you. But—bless me—don't you see that nothing in the world looks more suspicious than the parade he makes of strict morality?"

"But he never airs anything—on the contrary, he says very little—and he never tries to force his opinions on you."

"Oh, good God, no—he leaves them always vague. Can't you see that he's always afraid of committing himself? He has the manner of a man afraid of revealing his true colours—and with it all, can you tell me of any good action that he has done? I know well that I can often be condemned for what I say—I speak out bluntly whatever comes into my head—and I've no particular motive for listening to my own

voice—but, my God, this I do know well, and that is, that my deeds are clean."

"You are fortunate in being so certain of that."

"That's not the point. I've nothing on my conscience—so much the worse for the fools who make the mistake of thinking I have. I've found out—I know a thing or two. Anyway, Grimm is a rascal" . . . and so he ran on.

The Diary for the same day (dated midnight) records an upsetting evening spent with Francueil. Informed by Madame d'Epinay that their relationship must now be limited strictly to friendship, he, of course, scented a rival. "You are in love. Grimm loves you. I am sure of it." Then declaring, "This will kill me," threw himself at her knees in a flood of tears.

CHAPTER IX

1755

M. Linant asked M. d'Epinay if he would allow him to put my son through an examination, in the presence of the family and a few friends, to see what progress he had made in his studies. Before deciding, my husband asked him: "Do you think he will pass well, Monsieur, has he been well coached?" "Admirably," replied Linant. "So much the better," returned M. d'Epinay.

"So much the worse," I put in.

"Why so, Madame?"

"You can wager, Monsieur, that he will answer like a parrot."

"The same old cranky notions and latest fads! By Jove, your daughter could not pass an examination in her catechism, I'll be bound."

"My daughter knows nothing by rote: she will be present at her brother's examination, and if she is asked anything within her comprehension she will answer, or else hold her peace if she has nothing to say."

"Very good, and I suppose you won't even hold her brother up to her as an example if he answers better than she does, for it won't do to hurt her feelings?"

"That depends——"

"Ah, don't you see that there's no common sense about this educational system of yours, and that it is destructive of all sense of emulation and shame."

"No, Monsieur, I do not: I only know that I am

teaching her, without her knowing it, only to strive for what is worth having and only to feel shame when there is something to really be ashamed of."

"As you like. M. Linant, you are quite sure, then, that my son will pass so as to do me credit, for I am the one who directs, and, in future, intend to direct, his education."

"Monsieur, I will answer for him," said Linant, "but Madame must not be robbed of her due. I am sure that you act in concert, but so far it has been she who has taken all the trouble."

"Madame d'Epinay has very good intentions, I don't deny that. Up to now I have been unable to interfere as I should have liked. I have been so very busy: but I am going to do differently. Madame, I'll undertake to issue the invitations—we'll make out a list. It must be for next Thursday, and as that day is a holiday, we must call this examination a prize-giving in speaking to the child. That's not against your principles, Madame?"

"Oh, no, not at all, Monsieur."

"Good, I was not sure. Now, first of all, the family—my brother, the Count, the Countess d'Houdetot: shall we put down the Marquis de Saint-Lambert?"

"If you like."

"Yes, yes, he won't spoil the show—besides he's a poet and will be the more alive to the child's parts. How about Gauffecourt?"

"Certainly."

"Duclos?"

"Why Duclos?"

"Oho! Why not?"

"Ah! oh well, he might not care. . . . No, don't ask Duclos."

"Ah! Excuse me, but I should like to have him. I'm not indifferent to his opinion, by Jove. Also I should like to have M. Rousseau. He will ask the

child comical questions that will enliven proceedings a bit. And look here! please get M. Grimm to come. I have never been to call on him, and perhaps he would not think it quite the thing for me to send him a note in my name, out of the blue, so to speak—or I'll send him a note in both our names and if I have a moment I'll call on him. Do you think he will come?"

"I hope so."

"I shall be glad to get some little idea of what he thinks of my son. I will invite Francueil too—I think that's all."

"Yes, my mother is the only one you have left out."

"Oh, but she comes as a matter of course. I will write the notes and think out some prize, for a surprise, for the child."

"Monsieur, do remember, please, that much depends on the choice of the prize."

"Yes, yes, yes, I know that well. . . ."

"It should not make him forgetful of the joy that he should feel on having done well, nor take his mind off the special attention I shall ask my friends to pay him."

"The devil a lot he'll care about that, I'm thinking."

"But if you would only let me see to it. I beg you, Monsieur, do tell me what you propose to give him."

"No, no, I want it to be a surprise. Leave it to me."

Francueil now began to manifest jealousy, and made Madame d'Epinay promise that when he was coming to see her Grimm should not be there as well. Unfortunately Grimm called one day when she was expecting Francueil, and the latter arrived before she could get rid of the former. Francueil was rude, Madame d'Epinay embarrassed, and M. Grimm, "after looking at them both in astonishment, bowed and departed." She told Francueil that she could not go

on with this nonsense as it was putting her in an awkward position.

"What do you suppose M. Grimm will think of your manner to him just now: you hardly bowed to him."

"He can think what he likes," replied Francueil. "It's your fault: why didn't you keep to your word?"

"You ought to know," I replied, "that having been so foolish as to make such a promise I did not break it purposely. However, to avoid being exposed to any more such absurd scenes, I'll take back my word, and shall make you no more promises."

"You're letting out more than you think, Madame: why should you feel uncomfortable, were it not that, M. Grimm has stolen your heart from me, and were there not some understanding between you two, or likely to be one."

"I've told you already, Monsieur, that there's nothing of the sort, and let me say so for the last time. I only lay claim to his esteem and friendship, but if I am going to behave in this roundabout and uncomfortable way, I shall run the risk of lowering myself in his eyes, and for that I should never forgive myself, nor anyone else who was the cause of it."

"Duclos says—he's told me things. . . ."

"What! Duclos has told you? . . ."

"Awful things of Grimm: he is really very worried at the way you trust him. He takes a very great interest in you—does Duclos: in spite of all his funny ways, he's fond of you."

"But you have known Grimm for some time. What is your opinion of him? I have a sufficiently high opinion of you to feel sure that you will be fair."

"I only know him very slightly—just as an acquaintance. All I know is that his friends think a tremendous lot of him, but I've never found him pleasant, but still, I call to mind that he never talks except in intimate

conversation with one person, and never commits himself to any definite statement in public: otherwise, I really don't care one way or another, for all the use I have for him. That man will never be a friend of mine, and were you as indifferent to him as I am . . ."

"I can't be—you forget that I am under too deep an obligation to him to . . ."

"Oh! there's a lot could be said about that obligation."

Letter from Madame d'Epinay to M. de Lisieux

Oh, we did have such a nice day yesterday, Monsieur, and how sorry I was that you could not share it with me. I did write you well in time, but that dreadful business of yours constantly deprives us of your company. This time business has done not only us, but you, a bad turn. My children were charming. Pauline is delightful. My son passed his examination well: but you will have to let me be as reiterative as I like, on this enjoyable topic.

All the family, as you know, and our friends were invited by M. d'Epinay to be present with us at the children's examination. My son was to be examined on Cicero, Roman History and two books of the Æneid. Linant had been strutting about since the previous evening, and when we were all assembled, he went up to everyone rubbing his hands, telling them not to expect too much, but seeming so certain that his pupil would score a success that the child, too, was puffed up.

The dinner was great fun. M. de Francueil, who had sent word to say that he was unwell, did not come. My daughter, whom they all asked what her subject was, was rather abashed to confess that she only knew a little geography, "but" she added, roguishly, "if

my brother sticks, I may be able to prompt him, for I have remembered a good deal of his lessons."

"That is to say," said her father, "that you only remember what you are not taught."

"Papa," she returned, "I remember what I understand quite well, but not any more."

She was true to her word, for when my son hesitated twice in his Roman history, the little one, who was watching, stood up and answered, laughing, for him. Rousseau asked her: "What made you remember that?"

"Monsieur, because it is so beautiful, and I do like it so!" One of the incidents related to Regulus when he urged the Romans to reject the proposals of peace that he had brought to Rome, knowing that his life would be forfeit if they were rejected.

On another occasion when my son was asked to give a rule of Latin syntax and he hesitated, the little one, to our great surprise, whispered it to him. M. d'Epinay asked her: "Pauline, did you remember that rule because it was so beautiful, and you did like it so much?"

"Oh, gracious, no," she answered, "only because my brother has been told it so often, that I can't help remembering it, though I don't know what it means."

My son, however, came out much better than I had expected. He did not recite like a parrot, and his answers were nearly all correct.

Duclos jabbered away: M. Grimm hardly said a word: it was Gauffecourt, Rousseau and Countess d'Houdetot who really entered into the spirit of the thing. When the examination was over, Linant asked if there might be the same gathering, in three months' time, in the country, and Pauline exclaimed, "Oh, then, Messieurs, Mesdames, I want to be examined too."

"And on what subjects?" asked M. de Jully.

"I don't know yet, Uncle, we must see: I shall ask Mama what they had better be."

I had given my friends the hint as to what they should say to my son by way of encouragement, in case he deserved praise, but M. d'Epinay spoilt it all, as I had expected. He left the room, taking the child with him, and told us all to stay as we were, and then he brought him back dressed in a cerise velvet suit with splendid cuffs. I was dumbfounded at this piece of bad taste, and the others felt as I did, the more so as the child was so pleased that there was no getting away from the bad effect of such a prize. He ran straight to kiss my mother who for two hours had never stopped shedding tears of joy, and then he came to me. "I thought you looked much nicer before, my child," I told him. Duclos said, "It's very fine, my boy, but don't forget that a fool in lace is a fool still." Rousseau, when my son wanted him to admire his suit, said not a word, but when the child pressed him, he finally said: "Monsieur, I am no judge of finery, but only of a man. I felt like talking to you before, but now I do not."

M. d'Epinay, feeling rather uncomfortable over the way his prize was received, wanted to make up for his foolishness, but I cut the conversation short and promised my son to give him some mark of my approbation. Then Pauline was questioned on geography and made not one mistake. Her father had nothing for her, and contented himself with kissing and praising her. But I mean to make her a present of a pretty desk which will induce her to sit down to study frequently in order to use it. And for my son I am getting some engravings of good pictures illustrative of some of the historical incidents about which he told us, or portraits of great men that he had mentioned. I am also giving him some good books which will be, purposely, very simply bound. That, Monsieur, was a happy day for poor Emilie, out of how many months, how many years of sorrow.

The Diary

Madame d'Epinay had a great explanation with M. Grimm. She explained that efforts were being made in a certain quarter to keep them apart, but that Francueil was not involved.

"I do not suspect him, Madame," said Grimm, "no man whom you have honoured with your affection could be a rascal—but possibly Duclos is the person?"

"How do you know?"

"From what I know of him."

"Yes, it is he."

"Permit me to say, Madame, that the source of the information is sufficient indication of its worth. He also takes such interest in me that he has already provided me with secret information in order to damage you with me."

After hearing and disposing of the tittle-tattlings of Duclos, M. Grimm advised her not to break with him suddenly, but first show the contempt she felt for him and wait for a favourable opportunity of speaking out (if that were necessary) without inviting awkward reprisals. As for Francueil (the true state of whose relations with Madame d'Epinay he now knew) he opined that she had given him reason to be jealous, but bade her not yield slavishly to him any more.

They talked till midnight. "I am proud" (said M. Grimm) "to have the honour of helping you: but it vexes me to see that anyone can sway you like a child, and that out of kindness for others you are at pains to conceal from them your own true worth. You almost succeed in concealing it from yourself. If I was not quite sure that you have it in you to show your own true self to your intimates, I think I should have it in me to renounce the pleasure of staying at

your side. But what a pity to bury such lovely and rare qualities! You do not realise your own mental gifts, nor the possibilities of your own soul and character."

"Why then," I asked him, "avoid me when I need you so. Without admitting that I possess the superior qualities with which you credit me, I feel that I am acquiring some every time I talk with you. You will adorn me with your own. I feel that my heart echoes your principles. When I am with you my soul is filled with pure joy, and when we part, I still feel for quite a while afterwards an aftermath of happiness with which no painful memory is mingled —a feeling hitherto unknown to me. Yes, my friend, I would have you ever near me. I glory in your affection and your esteem. Abandon an idea so opposed to our happiness."

"It would be sacrifice," he replied, "that I would offer to your peace of mind. Possibly your friends, whoever they may be, are better suited to one in your position. You see I am already bringing trouble into your midst. I fear that M. de Francueil's behaviour causes you pain: he has talked you over to Duclos, and you don't know of what Duclos may be capable. In trying to ruin me, they will harm you. Your husband will turn the folly of the one and the ill-nature of the other to his own ends. Weigh all these disadvantages carefully, and consider whether you will have the courage to combat calumny, if you cannot crush it."

"I have considered it all," I told him, "with you I fear nothing: but look to yourself, are you not afraid of linking yourself with a poor, unfortunate woman, the victim of fate and a combination of circumstances so peculiar that I do not think there was ever the like before."

Letter from Madame d'Epinay to M. de Lisieux

30th March, 1755

I was going to write (to Grimm) when Duclos came in: he accosted me with—"Ah, well, what do you make of Grimm now? Here's a fine chance for him to play the mourning man."

"What do you mean?" I asked.

"Eh, by God!" said he, "don't you really know? Do you mean to say that you don't know that the Count de Frièse is dead?"

I gave a scream and stood motionless from the shock. . . . Turning my back on Duclos, I wrote off at once to M. Grimm. Duclos took advantage of my distress to take my note and read it, whilst I was looking for something to fasten it with.

"Are you mad?" said he, "to write such a note and on such an occasion. One never knows in the confusion of a time like this into whose hands it may fall. I don't think it very proper to placard the fact that *you are more overwhelmed than he is by his bereavement*, or '*that he is your very dear friend*,' still less that '*you will not breathe again till he is by your side.*' Devil take me, anyone would think the Count was your lover from the state you're in—for it's surely not Grimm—you've sworn to me that he isn't. A simple expression of sympathy is the proper thing for the occasion."

"Monsieur, you are right," I said, "this one won't do."

(Madame d'Epinay then wrote a more restrained note which she read to Duclos who interrupted her with suggestions all the time.)

When Duclos had departed, and I was tidying up my desk, I missed my first note, and I wrote off straight to Duclos asking what he had done with it. He replied that as I could not find it, he must evidently

have thrown it into the fire, for I knew how he disliked seeing waste paper about. M. Grimm then arrived, grief and weariness written on his face. . . . He told me that the Count had had a fatal relapse, and that his friends were going to shut themselves up at St Cloud for six days and were compelling him to go with them.

While in retirement at St Cloud M. Grimm sent his servant daily to report his news to Madame d'Epinay. Rousseau enjoyed a share of her rather fussy interest, for he was unwell, but when she proposed to send a doctor to him, he wrote back:

"For God's sake, don't send M. Malouin[1] to me any more. I am not well enough to enjoy listening to his clack. I was in a tremble all day yesterday lest he should come. Deliver me from the dread of possibly having to be rude to a worthy man whom I like, and who comes at your request, and do not add yourself to the number of those importunate friends who in order to make me live as they would have me live will fuss me to death. Really, I'd like to be in the depths of the wilderness when I'm ill."

Rousseau delivered himself of another observation in the same vein, when he and Madame d'Epinay ran across Baron d'Holbach at the Tuileries. Speaking of Grimm's bereavement, the Baron said, "Nobody knows better than I do how Grimm is to be pitied. But that lot (the friends at St Cloud) are no comfort to him."

"Faith," replied Rousseau, "I see that it's not misfortune that renders a man most miserable, but it's the passion that people have for consoling others and of showering kindnesses here, there and everywhere. Why not leave a body alone? Personally, I wish to say that if ever some misfortune befalls me

[1] Dr. Akakia, Mlle Quinault's friend, and the Queen's doctor, and according to Marmontel, "more Purgon" than Purgon himself.

and my friends feel it incumbent upon them to take notice of it, I hope that they will allow me to choose my own particular form of consolation, for, anyway, I ought to know better than others what suits me best."

Letter from Madame d'Epinay to M. Grimm

At last I have got rid of Duclos, and I hope, my friend, that you will not disapprove of what I have done. Yesterday his impertinence was so pointed that by no manner of means could it be borne. This is what happened—tell me what you think.

(She proceeded to say that De Valory's niece, who was in Paris for a fortnight, wished to hear Jelyotte sing. Madame d'Epinay therefore arranged for Jelyotte to sing at her house. But the singer, who said that he was taking a fortnight's rest and was not supposed to be singing at supper parties, only consented to sing for her on the condition that Duclos should not be present. So she arranged that the Chevalier de Valory, his niece and Mlle d'Ette should be the only guests.)

Duclos had sent to ask me in the morning if I should be at home, and I said "No." About six o'clock he turned up, and was told I was out. He said he would come in and wait. The servants objected, saying they had no orders, and could not admit anyone. He asked for Linant so they let him in. He went to my son's room, and my son's man said he would let my son know. "Where is he?" "With Madame." "I'll go there," and he came to my room laughing like a maniac. "By God!" said he, "I knew well that she was at home." "Yes, Monsieur, but not to you, as I sent you word."

I sent the children away that I might be free to rebuke Duclos for his insolence. "You will be cause of my dismissing my door-keeper for disobeying my orders," I told him.

CHARLES P. DUCLOS
(*Carmontelle*)

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" It is not his fault," he said, and he told me what I have just told you. " I know perfectly well," he continued, " that you did send me word that you would not be at home, but I did not believe it, and I want to know who are the people whom I am not to meet." I replied that it seemed a strange thing to me that I could do nothing in my own home without his being informed, and that I had told him distinctly, and more than once, that I wished to be free, and that he should not have needed telling again, and finally that I must ask him to go without my having to say anything further on that point. But, his curiosity getting the better of him, he gave a milder reply than I had expected. " I'll go," said he. " I'll go when supper is served and your guests arrive."

I saw by other things that he had let drop that he suspected that I was waiting for you and wanted to sup alone with you. Seeing that he was getting nothing out of me, " Admit," said he, " that you're expecting Grimm and I'll go." " I've nothing to admit," I told him, " and you'll drive me to desperate measures if you don't go." But then fearing that his suspicions would end in some tiresome outburst, I added, " Why should I, may I ask, close my door, and make a secret of it, if I was expecting M. Grimm? "

" The devil, Madame, I did not think you were so . . ."

" If I tell you whom I am expecting, will you go at once? "

" Yes, on my honour. . . ."

" I am expecting the Chevalier de Valory and his niece. . . ."

" Aha, aha, and Jelyotte too, aren't you? Why didn't you say so? "

" I don't say so."

" No, but I *do* say so. Didn't I hear it the other

day. She asked you to. I was present. The coxcomb! I am sure it was he who didn't want me to be present, and you are stupid enough to pander to his impudence. A pretty part to make you play. Deuce take me! driving away your friends! A puppy, whose livelihood is gone if he gets a cold!"

He was talking thus, when my servant came to ask me for an address for a parcel that I was sending someone. "You will find it," I said, "on the mantelpiece." He looked and I looked, but we could not find it. Duclos, fidgeting to get rid of Cahouet, said to me, "What, those old addresses that were up there? I've just thrown them in the fire—you know how I dislike waste paper lying about. What's all the fuss about? If you wanted to keep them why didn't you lock them up?"

"Ah, Monsieur," said I, "this impertinence is too much. I insist on being mistress in my own house, and the only mistress, and to prove it, I ask you to go, please, and quickly too."

"Ah, goodness gracious," he returned, "I shall be in no hurry to return: if what you're wanting is someone to toady to you, I swear I'll never set foot in your place again, even if you go down on your knees to me."

However (as the Diary records) Duclos was soon back again. But the door was fast closed to him this time, as M. Grimm had warned Madame d'Epinay never to receive Duclos again unless she received a written apology from him. But the note she got from Duclos was as follows:

"Let me know if you're having supper at home to-night. I overlook your tantrums when I think of the damage a rupture with me would do your reputation. Poor child! You make me sorry for you. You're being fooled and you don't know it. I must

indeed be a very decent fellow to conduct myself as I do with you."

Letter from Madame d'Epinay to M. Duclos

You cannot imagine how deeply I admire your magnanimity. I feel myself so unworthy of it, that I advise you not to let it prompt you to come to my house against my wishes, for were you to do so, under any pretext whatsoever, I should most certainly have you thrown out at the door, however unpleasant such a proceeding would be to myself. You know little of me if you think that I could allow you to honour me with your presence out of pity. Leave the care of my good name to me, please, and in God's name let me no longer be beholden to your good offices. Further, if you would have me regard you as an honourable man, at least refrain from claiming the title when *tête-à-tête*, for I could not contradict you without giving you away. If I am weak enough, good-natured enough, or timid enough to pardon you, may that induce you, if possible, to act in future with more delicacy, and above all with greater uprightness and more honourably, for people are not always to be palmed off with hearsay and they will soon know you as well as I do."

Duclos had to take his dismissal as final and went round running Madame d'Epinay down. Unfortunately she had made another enemy of a former friend.

The Chevalier de Valory, tired of Mlle d'Ette's temper, had decided to leave her and set up with his niece who was to housekeep for him. In the meantime, the three of them, the niece, the Chevalier and Mlle d'Ette were all living together, Mlle d'Ette being unaware of the impending change. However, her suspicions were aroused and one night she burst into his bedroom, woke him up, sat on his bed and poured

forth a tirade. The poor man, after a vain attempt to calm her, declared that he could stand "this hell no longer" and that he intended to leave her for ever. She then bade him get out at once, reminding him that the lease was in her name, and that the furniture was hers. He and his niece received the order to quit at daybreak. He rose, packed his belongings, and went to his niece's room, and there they deliberated as to where to go at that very early hour. The niece suggested that they should seek temporary sanctuary with Madame d'Epinay, while they looked for some place to stay in. At this juncture the Chevalier received a note from Mlle d'Ette, which was such a mixture of love, submission, threats, fury, promises, etc., and so alarmed him, that he and the niece fled incontinently to Madame d'Epinay's hospitable roof, and she, kind soul, would not hear of their leaving her until they left Paris in four days' time. Meanwhile the deserted d'Ette smashed every article of furniture in the house until her eye caught a note left by the Chevalier, in which he asked her to keep anything she wanted and send on the rest to him. She then suspended her smashings. But she never pardoned Madame d'Epinay for sheltering the pair. She rushed to Madame d'Esclavelles with her tale of injury (not sticking at revealing all her own past) and in order to prove what she called Madame d'Epinay's ingratitude, let out all that lady's most intimate confidences. M. de Lisieux then went round to tackle Mlle d'Ette and managed to compel her to hand over to him every paper she possessed relative to Francueil and Madame d'Epinay.

The Diary

La Chevrette : June

Oh, how dearly I have paid for faults due to the weakness of my character! I will overcome it or die

in the attempt. During the two months that I have spent here, I might have been perfectly happy, but I have done everything calculated to mar that happiness and have relied too much on my own wisdom and good intentions.

The house-party at La Chevrette was composed of M. Grimm (whenever not in attendance on the Duc d'Orleans), M. de Francueil (a very frequent visitor), Madame d'Houdetot and M. de Saint-Lambert. All the trouble arose from the fact that Madame d'Epinay was not sufficiently careful to be thoroughly "off" with the old love before she was on with the new. In other words, she allowed the supplanted Francueil to pour out his plaints as discarded lover to her whenever his melancholy became too distressing to be denied a voice, and of this dangerous weakness on her part M. Grimm saw fit to disapprove.

The situation became a little difficult, and Madame d'Esclavelles begged M. Grimm to advise her daughter. M. Grimm therefore proffered his advice, but in a manner restrained and glacial. Madame d'Epinay, piqued, as coldly promised to take it. So Francueil, next day, was informed that he must expect no more private conversations since they had not the desired effect of calming him. The ultimatum was delivered on the terrace, and then she retired, tears in her eyes, to her room. M. Grimm, strolling on to the terrace that she had just vacated, came upon the frantic Francueil pacing up and down, and Francueil either intentionally or unintentionally ignored him. The offended Grimm sought Madame d'Epinay, asking the reason of this behaviour, and she told him of what had passed between herself and Francueil.

"That does not surprise me," said he, "you perpetuate his pains by your most misleading compassion. You ought, right from the beginning, to have forbidden him to carry his plaints to you, and have

refused to see him, had he insisted. I have left you to go on entirely in your own way, for ill-timed advice would have only offended you, though for that matter, since we have been in the country, you have not asked my advice, but now things have come to such a pass that they can be put up with no longer, unless it is your deliberate intention, Madame, to make me take some steps myself."

"My intention!" I said, quickly, "how can you think such a thing?"

"But," he retorted, "it would perhaps be best for all concerned. You are placing me in a very undignified and invidious position in regard to yourself, Madame, permit me to tell you."

"You drive me desperate," I said, "do not harbour such an idea for an instant: but tell me what I am to do."

"You must keep your head! And if you want my advice, Madame, it is this—that if he makes another attempt to speak with you, you must tell him very firmly that he must now stop talking to you of what you do not wish to hear: you must tell him that your friendship for him has led you to grant him a favour that he has made you regret, that it is for him now to find the best way out of his trouble, for himself, and that in future he must not look for any assistance from you, and that to stop the remarks that people are bound to make, your advice to him is that he should take his departure. You can soften this decision by assuring him of the feeling that you ought and which, no doubt, you will always cherish for him. That, Madame," said M. Grimm coldly, "is what self-respect demands of you."

His tone froze me: I felt the wisdom of his advice, but I did wish he could have given it more kindly, for then I should have followed it like a lamb. Two things, however, made me rebel: first, the cold,

authoritative tone, which terrified me, and made me afraid that I was going to be domineered over once more, and should be yielding my will to a fresh tyrant, instead of merely attuning it to a friend's, and then, secondly, I was still more afraid that it might be thought that my friendship with M. Grimm was the cause of the rupture, if Francueil suddenly ceased to visit me.

She said that she wanted to avoid gossip, for anyone who saw the state Francueil was then in would think that she had given him up, which would look bad after a ten years' liaison. M. Grimm reminded her that for the last two years Francueil had neglected her. She said " yes ", but that Francueil's behaviour just then would not lead anyone to imagine it.

" It is only too well known," he replied, " thanks to your false friends, who have retailed your confidences for public entertainment."

She wanted to tackle Francueil straight away but M. Grimm, as usual, preached caution, as he wished her to see an instance of rudeness on the part of Francueil towards himself, with her own eyes, before speaking to him on the point. But she being terrified lest the men should pick a quarrel, and some disaster ensue, could not wait and therefore wrote a letter to Francueil in which she requested him either to explain to M. Grimm that he had not intended to be rude or else go away. She did not tell Grimm that she had written this letter, for she believed that, though he would have approved of it at any other time, he was now in the mood to forbid her to do anything, even if he did approve of it. Terrified and trembling, she handed her missive to Francueil. Grimm saw. It was nine o'clock in the evening: they were having music. Grimm's face at once became cold and ironical: at supper he turned from Madame d'Epinay

when she addressed him. Francueil having read the letter made an excuse for retiring to his room as soon as supper was over. Grimm, who thought she had made some appointment with Francueil, observed in a casual way that he had received letters which necessitated his return to Paris the next day.

Madame d'Epinay passed a frightful night, a prey to fearful alarm. She sat writing letters to the two men and tearing them up. At five o'clock she fell asleep, worn out, and slept till nine. At *déjeuner* she heard, to her surprise, that Francueil had left the house at six o'clock that morning. Seeing that Grimm evidently thought she was not playing straight, and was avoiding her, she wrote him a note, begging him not to go away or condemn her unheard, and she took it to his room herself. But he received it gravely and put it on the mantelpiece, as "though it were something quite unnecessary and the contents of which he knew by heart. I said to him in a whisper, 'You push harshness and injustice too far, Monsieur—for the last time, I beg you, hear me. . . . My grief is too much for me, I can no longer answer for myself.' I had reached that crushed state of numbness when nothing matters any more. In that condition I regained my room, and I stayed there more or less dead to the world."

All the morning M. Grimm never came near her. In the afternoon a special messenger came from Francueil, bringing for Madame d'Epinay a large parcel and a little box, and for M. d'Epinay, a letter giving some excuse for his hurried departure.

After dinner M. Grimm came to my room, and came alone. I fancied that curiosity rather than sympathy for me prompted his visit. I had just opened the box and the parcel: they contained all my letters, and my portrait which Francueil had returned,

together with a letter of twelve pages—in which all that frenzy, repentance, despair and regret could utter were inscribed. He bade me an eternal farewell, and said he intended to leave for his estate on the morrow.

I was seized with compunction as I thought of the dreadful state he was in, and I must say that the contrast between all that he was suffering on my account, and M. Grimm's harshness, was not very favourable to the latter. He was struck by my broken condition (according to what he told me later) and by the despair written on my face. I hardly saw him come in. "Madame," said he, "I have come to hear what you have to say to me." I looked at him with dimmed eyes, and said not a word. He was alarmed. "I do not know," he went on, "why you oppose my departure. With a little more straightforwardness, we should all have been less unhappy, I cannot bear to think that I have brought sorrow upon you, or been the means of . . ."

"My friend," I said, "I find you different from what I thought: you are hard, tyrannical: it seems to me that you push friendly offices beyond the prescribed bounds of forbearance and kindliness."

"I had a foreboding, Madame, that a character as firm and forceful as mine would ill combine with the weakness of yours. I can only help my friends just in my own way."

"Ah, it's certain, Monsieur, that the good you do others costs them dear!"

"I know that, but I warned you of it. It was you who asked for my advice. You know I was in no hurry to give it: I don't care to give advice simply to have it treated with contempt. And now, I repeat, Madame, that possibly you cling more to your former attachments than you yourself think."

"Look," said I, interrupting him, and handing him

Francueil's letter, "see how unjust your suspicions are, and how cruel you are to me!"

He read the letter without saying a word. However, I must do him the justice of saying that if he had felt sorry for my plight, he was still more sorry for having been so harsh with me, when I confessed to him what I had foolishly done without telling him. I admit that my conduct was enough to mislead him, but I did not find it the easier for that to forget his severity, in spite of all the regret he expressed and all the pains he took to make up for it. The grief of this affair has left so deep an imprint upon my heart that I do not think I shall ever quite get over it as long as I live, and though I am now calm, it has left me with a depression impossible to shake off.

CHAPTER X

1755–1756

Duclos was not the man to allow Madame d'Epinay to turn him out of her house without being revenged either on her or on M. Grimm, whom he suspected of having inspired the lady with the energy to shake off his yoke.

He went to Diderot, Grimm's great friend, and to him spoke lightly of Madame d'Epinay, saying that Grimm was in love with her, and that she would make a man a very charming mistress, though only a fool would risk a serious love-affair with her. Diderot, knowing that Grimm was incapable of light love, was alarmed at the thought of his friend being in the toils of such a woman, and he hastened to go and see him in order to put him on his guard. It is a very long conversation that M. de Lisieux records as having taken place between the two men, and in the course of it Diderot inquired:

"What kind of a feeling would you entertain for, and expect in return from Madame d'Epinay or any other woman? If it's merely a matter of sensual pleasure and that is clearly understood between you, I see no particular danger."

"That sort of liaison would not suit me: I loathe that sort of thing: be it from pride, be it from fastidiousness, I must be the chosen lover, the one and only. I want to sacrifice all to her I love, with no shame to it, and I want her only to take from me what she is willing to return. I care little for sensual satisfaction and its intoxication, when unallied with respect and

trust; it's a low sort of pleasure and makes no appeal to my mind and heart. I want to be even happier after enjoyment than at the actual moment of enjoyment itself, perhaps through vanity, but—there it is—I am as I am. My idea is to find my own true happiness in the woman who entrusts her happiness to my keeping: whate'er betide, absent or present, her thoughts must be with me as mine with her. Finally, our mutual respect and esteem must be such as to lift us above the inevitable troubles and bothers that occur when one braves any of the canons of one's little world. That, my friend, is my idea of happiness, and the one that suits me."

"And you promise yourself this happiness with Madame d'Epinay?"

"Assuredly."

Duclos, so said Diderot, had declared that Madame d'Epinay had compromised herself with him (Duclos).

Grimm flatly denied the story: he asked what Rousseau had had to say.

"Rousseau made no statement, but, faith, he seems to have no better opinion of her."

Grimm denied ever having written her a love-letter, and said that she had never written him one.

"I have seen one," said Diderot.

"What was in the note, say?"

"My word—let me see. It was, I think, about the death of the Count de Frièse."

This of course was the note that Duclos had purloined.

Diderot told M. de Lisieux that when he left Grimm he felt convinced that Duclos was a scoundrel, but was not so strongly convinced that Madame d'Epinay was as good a woman as her friend said she was. And adds M. de Lisieux, "Duclos meanwhile let no chance

slip of running down Madame d'Epinay, and to him she owes the prejudice that a number of people felt against her for far too long a time."

The Diary

Rousseau was very depressed and bored with Paris. Madame d'Epinay said "why not travel?" But no, he had neither the health nor the money. "No," said he, "what I want is either my native land or the country. But I can't make up my mind. You don't know," he said, "how, when it comes to leaving, for ever, even those things which one has sometimes disliked, the sacrifice is often almost beyond human strength. First and foremost I want to be let alone, that's one of the greatest blessings of this life, and one that my dear friends, or so-called friends, have a passion for denying me."

"I can understand," she said, "how difficult it is for them, and I, for my part, do not promise to ever assist you to the attainment of this blessing."

Rousseau continued in his perplexity: to stay or not to stay in Paris. From Switzerland he received pressing invitations, but they were too pressing to suit him—besides how could he leave such dear friends as Grimm, Diderot and Madame d'Epinay.

Then the following entry in the Diary appears:

"There is, a short distance from La Chevrette, on the edge of the forest, a little house, called the Hermitage, which belongs to M. d'Epinay. I shall suggest to Rousseau that he should live there. I will have it fitted up so as to suit his way of living, and shall take care not to tell him that I have gone to this expense on his account. He has never been there, and he will think the house has always been just as he now sees it. I shall ask M. d'Epinay if I may put the workmen in."

Letter from Madame d'Epinay to Rousseau

I have been thinking over your reasons, my dear Rousseau, for accepting or not accepting the proposals made to you. If you go to Geneva, you say what is to be done about Mesdames Le Vasseur? That difficulty is easily disposed of. I will look after them until you see if you can settle down in Geneva and live there. It is not my business to make up your mind for you, and perhaps my advice would be biased. I only want to remove obstacles : it is for you to decide. If you decline, you will have, in any case, so you have told me, to leave Paris, as you cannot stand the place any longer. In this case I have a little house that is at your disposal. You have often heard me speak of the Hermitage, which is on the edge of the Forest of Montmorency. It has a lovely view : there are five rooms, a kitchen, a cellar, an acre and a quarter of kitchen garden, a spring of running water, and the forest for a garden. The house is yours, my dear friend, if you decide to stay in France.

I also call to mind that you told me that if you had one hundred pistoles more income, you would not go elsewhere. You know, I hope, what a pleasure it would be to me to make things easier for you. I have been thinking for some time past how this could be managed, without knowing that this was all that was wanted. This is what I propose; let me add to the proceeds of your last book whatever is required to bring the amount up to the sum of one hundred pistoles. I will do it just in whatever way you like. It is such a small service that I suggest, that you cannot be offended. I have other suggestions to make with regard to your household arrangements at the Hermitage, but they are too detailed for a letter. So do think it over, and weigh things carefully, my dear friend, and rest assured that I only want to do what will be for your

own happiness. I realise to the full the value of your friendship and the pleasure of your society, but I think one must love one's friends, for themselves, first and foremost.

Rousseau's reply to Madame d'Epinay

I'm far from having settled anything with M. Tronchin and your friendship for me has put another obstacle in the way which appears more than ever difficult to surmount. But you have consulted your heart rather than your pocket and my disposition in the proposed arrangement. Your proposal struck chill to my heart. How little you know your own interests in wishing to make a valet of a friend, and how little you know me if you think that I am to be swayed by the reasons you advance. It is not a question of life or death with me, but what I am so bothered about is how to obtain the most complete independence during the years that yet remain to me. Hard as I tried I could not obtain it in Paris. I am still trying just as hard, and the thing that has worried me most terribly for over a year is my inability to discover where I shall be most likely to get it. However, my own country seems the most likely place. Yet I must confess to you that independence were the sweeter in your vicinity. My present extreme perplexity cannot continue much longer, I must make up my mind in a week's time, but be very sure that I shall not be swayed by self-interested motives, because I have never feared to lack bread, and if the worst came to the worst, I know how to do without it.

However, I do not decline to hear what you have to say to me, provided that you bear in mind that I am not to be bought, and that my sentiments, which are now above any price to be named, would soon drop below the value at which possibly they have been

assessed. And now—let us forget, both of us, that there has even been any suggestion of such a thing.

As for you, yourself, I do not doubt that your heart is fully sensible of the value of friendship, but I fancy that I need your friendship more than you do mine, for you have many compensations, that I have not, and which I have renounced for ever.

Note from Madame d'Epinay to Rousseau

Your letter made me laugh at first, I thought it so extreme, but afterwards I was distressed for your sake, for one needs must have a very perverted mind to take amiss a proposal dictated by a friendship of which you must be so well aware, or to suppose that I have the foolish pride that loves to create dependants. I have no idea what these compensations that you find in my lot may be unless friendship is one of them.

I do not advise you to make up your mind just now, for you seem to be in no state to judge wisely of what will suit you best. Good day to you, my dear Rousseau.

Letter from Rousseau to Madame d'Epinay

I hasten to write you two words, for I cannot bear you to think that I am annoyed, or to misunderstand my expressions. I only used the word "valet" as indicating the degrading effect upon my soul that any abandonment of my principles would entail. I thought we understood one another better than we do: should such explanations be required between two who feel and think as we do? What I call independence is not merely the independence that work gives: I want to earn my bread, I find a pleasure in doing so; but I do not wish to be bound down by any other obligation if I can help it.

I will gladly hear your proposals, but be prepared

for a refusal, for be they gratis or subject to condition, I wish for neither the one nor the other; I will never pledge a particle of my liberty, neither for my own support, or that of any other body. I want to work, but in my own way, and also to stop work when I choose without objections being raised, save by my stomach.

I'll say no more about compensations: all things fade, some day, but true friendship remains, and 'tis then that it has a sweetness unalloyed and endless. Study my vocabulary well, my good friend, if we are to understand one another. Believe me, my expressions rarely have the usual significance, for it is always my heart that communes with you, and maybe you will realise some day that its language is not that of other hearts. Till to-morrow.

The Diary

I have seen little of M. Grimm for some time. He has hardly left Baron d'Holbach, who has just married his first wife's sister. She is, they say, a very pleasant woman. His friends can say what they like —but a person who was in such terrible distress on the death of his first wife, and then so quickly consoles himself, hardly conveys the impression of stability of character.

She still went on trying to influence Rousseau's decision, but all he said was: "So I'm a slave then, and I've got to give up my liberty. No, no, that won't do for me."

"I am surprised," said I to him, "that with your brains, experience, and philosophy, you make so much of a thousand and one petty annoyances which are frequently not worth mentioning or even noticing."

"What? Good Lord!" he returned, "you call

the injustice, daily ingratitude, and biting remarks made by so-called friends, petty annoyances?"

"Come, now," said I, "I can only reply by the saying 'On rit avec toi et tu te faches.' But you really can't believe for a moment that people hurt you intentionally?"

"Intentionally or not, I don't care. But don't think, Madame, that I am merely indignant on my own account—the things that I have seen you suffer at the hands of your best friends—some twenty times. . . ."

"Do as I do, my friend: if they are false, spiteful, unjust, I let them go. I feel sorry for them, and I wrap myself up in my cloak—let me offer you the half of it."

He began to laugh, and then said: "I still don't know how to decide, but if I do accept your offer of the Hermitage, I refuse more definitely than ever the money you want to lend me. I shall not want for anything in the way of eatables: a cow, a pig, a kitchen, will amply suffice for our food."

I did not like to cross him any more, and we parted, half good-humouredly, half uncomfortably. M. d'Epinay has agreed to let me do up the Hermitage, and as it will not cost him anything, and as he will plume himself on having given his consent, that consent was not hard to obtain. I have put the workmen in the house—all is in order, and as soon as I know what Rousseau decides to do I shall furnish it. I have altered the fireplaces, and have had the one in the sitting-room so arranged that by means of plaques and stove-pipes it heats three rooms at the same time.

Letter from Rousseau to Madame d'Epinay

At last, Madame, I have made up my mind, and you see, you have won the day. So I shall spend my

Easter at the Hermitage, and shall stay as long as I am comfortable there, and you can stand me. That's as far as my plans go. I will come to see you to-morrow and we will talk it over, but be sure to keep it a secret if you please. Now, behold a removal and bother that makes me tremble! Oh, what a misfortune to be so rich! I shall have to leave half of myself in Paris even though you will be no longer there, that half being my chairs, tables, chests and what not, which cannot be added to what you may have already put in my château. Till to-morrow.

The Diary

The delight this letter caused me when I received it was such that I could not help bubbling over in front of M. Grimm, who was with me. I was very surprised to see that he disapproved of what I was doing for Rousseau, and disapproved in a way that I, at first, thought very hard. I wanted to argue the point and showed him the letters that had passed between us. "All that I can see here," said he, "is hidden pride on Rousseau's side, all through. You're doing him an ill service in giving him the Hermitage to live in, but you are going to do yourself a yet worse one. Solitude will sour his mind, he will behold all his friends, unjust, ungrateful, and you chiefest of all, if you refuse, but once, to do as he wishes: he will accuse you of having begged him to live near you, and of having kept him from obeying his country's call. Already I see the germ of his accusation in the wording of the letters you have shown me. These accusations will not be true, but also not sufficiently untrue to save you from censure and to make you look guilty of what you have no more done than the things you have hitherto been accused of."

"Ah, my friend," I exclaimed, "don't say that

again, for indeed I get into such hot water for doing kindnesses that maybe I had better take to doing unkindness to see if I should get on better that way."

"No," replied M. Grimm, "that you will never take to, but while still continuing to do the best in your power for yourself and yours, give up interfering in the affairs of others. People are too unfair towards you. I swear to you that the least trouble you will land yourself in, from all this, will be to make yourself look foolish: they will say that you gave Rousseau a home just out of affection and as a puff for yourself."

"Ah," I returned, "promise me that this false interpretation is the worst that I may expect, and I shall soon have made my decision."

"And I mine," said M. Grimm, "but if this interpretation should be the sequel to a rupture with Rousseau, there might be further complications which you do not anticipate."

"That," said I, "will never occur. My friendship requires no thanks. I quite see that that man would be unhappy anywhere for he is accustomed to be spoilt; he will always find me indulgent: we shall all of us consider it our duty and pleasure to make life pleasant for him."

"Exactly so," said M. Grimm, "but one always repents of giving way to unreasonableness. That man is most unreasonable: the more tolerant one is the worse he gets. Anyway, the deed is done: you cannot draw back now: for the time being, try to proceed with discretion."

M. Rousseau, who spent Easter at the Hermitage, was so enchanted with the house that his one desire was to instal himself there. Madame d'Epinay gave herself the pleasure of personally assisting at his settling-in, and the day was fixed as soon as all was in readiness for him. In the morning she sent a cart

to Rousseau's door for the goods and chattels that he wished to remove, and one of her servants went with it. M. Linant was in the saddle very early seeing to everything and he escorted Madame d'Epinay when she returned home. At ten o'clock she went in her carriage to fetch Rousseau and his two housekeepers. Mother Le Vasseur was a woman of seventy, heavy, stout, almost helpless. The road, where it enters the forest, becomes impassable for a *berlin* and Madame d'Epinay had not foreseen how difficult it would be to convey the worthy old dame, and how impossible it would be for her to foot the remainder of the journey. They had, therefore, to nail strong stakes to an armchair and so carry Mother Le Vasseur to the Hermitage. The poor woman wept for joy and gratitude. But Rousseau, for a moment moved and surprised, walked in silence for the rest of the way, head bent and aloof. They dined with him. Madame d'Epinay was so overdone that after dinner she nearly fainted: she tried her best not to let Rousseau see: he guessed but did not choose to give any sign.

The following letters passed between Madame d'Epinay and Rousseau when she was in Paris and he at the Hermitage:

Letter from Rousseau to Madame d'Epinay

13th April, 1756

Although the weather had been against me since I came here, I have just spent three of the most peaceful and most happy days of my life: and my days will be yet happier and more peaceful when the workmen, busied about my comfort or in the accomplishment of your thoughtful behests, have departed. Thus, for two or three days more, I shall not be entirely in solitude. Meantime, I am settling down, not according to the Turkish injunction, that enjoins us not to make to

ourselves any lasting habitation here, but according to my own, which would lead me never to quit my present abode. You will find me delightfully installed—except for the magnificence of your appointments, which every time I enter the room makes me look round respectfully for the tenant of so beautifully furnished a place. However, I warn you not to expect pretty speeches from me, at our first meeting, for I have a bone to pick with you for having come ill and suffering to my house-warming, without considering yourself or myself. Hasten to reassure me as to the effects of this imprudence, and remember once for all that I shall never pardon you for thus overlooking my interests in thinking of your own.

I have discovered two mistakes in the bill enclosed with the money you sent me, both are to your disadvantage and they make me suspicious that you have very likely made other mistakes of like nature, a thing which must not continue. The one is a matter of fourteen livres relating to seven quires of Dutch paper for which you paid five livres and five sous, instead of three livres and five sous per quire which it cost me, as I pointed out to you. The other is a matter of six livres for a copy of Racine which I never possessed and which, therefore, you cannot have sold at a profit for me. This makes you my creditor to the amount of twenty francs. So much for the money, now about ourselves.

I have thought of nothing but myself these last few days. I drink in the beauties of my abode and the charm of perfect liberty: but walking this morning in a delightful spot, I pretended that my old friend Diderot was with me, and as I pointed out to him the beauties of the walk, I found that they grew even fairer in my own eyes. I do not know if ever I shall have the pleasure of this increase in reality—it will be the doing of my old friend Grimm if ever I do.

Perhaps he may be able and perhaps he may be kind enough to get the friend he gained through me to come and see me, and will share with me the pleasure of welcoming him. However, it's not the time to speak of all this. But how about you, when am I to see you —restored to health—and your preserver[1] too? He promised me that he would come and will doubtless do so. As for you, my good friend, much as I should like to see you, do not come without his permission, if you come without him. Good day to you. Despite the hermit's beard, and the bear's coat, permit me to embrace you and lay at the feet of the Lord of the hut the homage of his very devoted subject and honorary water bailiff. The housekeepers send their very humble respects. They are settling down here as well as I am, and far better than my cat is doing.

Letter from Madame d'Epinay to Rousseau

As my gardener is returning, I am taking the opportunity of thanking you, my dear Hermit, for having sent me news of yourself. My news as to health is not too bad. The last two nights I have slept fairly well—that speaks for itself: I assure you that your house-warming did me a lot of good.

I have executed some of your commissions: your friend Diderot, whom I never see as you know, because he fights shy of new acquaintances, intends to go and see you soon. You know his time is not his own, so put down to work the delay which must be a sore trial to your friendship for him. Believe me, my friend, your friends are thinking of you and regretting you; so only think of the joy to come when their work and the weather give them a chance of coming to see you. . . .

[1] Tronchin who was in Paris in 1756.

Letter from Rousseau to Madame d'Epinay

May, 1756

You will be very glad to hear, Madame, that I am more and more delighted with my abode. You and I will have to change a lot if I am ever to leave this place. You and Monsieur d'Epinay will know the joy of having made someone a happy man, and so you will not regret having made me the offer of the half of your cloak. There remains one little thorn to extract, that being the removal of the rest of my belongings. You will have to come to my rescue, Madame, if you kindly will, in this difficulty. This is what I want done—but let us set it down in order—for I have so many wants, that it is a case of "primo" and "secundo".

1. Thirty-nine livres sixteen sous to be paid to Madame Sabi for Rent and Capitation Tax, see note in little book, herewith enclosed.
2. Receipt for both to be entered in said book.
3. Notice to be given for end of this quarter.
4. Bed and hangings in the alcove to be taken down to-day if possible.
5. Both to be packed in the gardener's cart with the mattress and whatever else can be put in, in the way of pots and pans.
6. Some capable body who can dismantle and pack the lot without damaging them should be sent with the gardener.
7. There will also remain, for another journey, a camp-bed in the loft, some forty bottles in the cellar, a cupboard containing booklets and papers, for the transport of which I will send a case from here, with a letter asking M. Deleyre to supervise the shifting of the papers.

I should add that they had better take the slight precaution of opening proceedings by paying Madame Sabi, lest she should take fright on seeing them stripping my rooms before mention had been made of this quarter's rent which is now due.

All this on the assumption that Madame d'Esclavelles' removal is now accomplished, and in order that the gardener's cart may not return empty when there are things to be brought back. Moreover, my vast prudence by which, with great travail, all these arrangements have been thought out, is subject to your own, supposing it suits your convenience better to make any alteration in these suggestions.

Accept Mlle Le Vasseur's very humble thanks. So you guessed—did you—that the contents of the ink bottle had been very fairly distributed, during the journey from La Chevrette here, over all the good folk's linen, of which barely a scrap is free from stain.

You seem, like the gods, to be endowed with wise and benevolent foresight, which was practically the remark made on the reception of your gift. The weather does not improve and your house is still unfinished. There is nothing to bring you back just yet. What you have to do, in order to turn the interval to good account, is to go on getting better in health, and then when you are at La Chevrette, you will often be able to come to the Hermitage, to seek a friend and solitude. I shall show you delightful walks that I shall enjoy the more when you, also, some day enjoy them.

Your counsel is good, I shall henceforth follow it. I will love my friends calmly but not coldly. I shall be delighted to see them, but able to do without them. I feel that they will never cease to be just as dear to me, and all that has dropped out of my feeling towards them is the excessive sensitiveness which made me often difficult and almost always discontented. Besides,

I have never doubted Diderot's good intentions, but it's a long way from his door to mine, and there's many a door at which to knock on the way. I'm bothered if he will ever really come to see me, he will plan to do so a hundred times, and I shall never see him once. He's a man that has to be seized and carried off by force, to make him fulfil his own intentions.

Good day, my good friend, and not Madame, although I have inadvertently written Madame twice at the beginning of this scribble. But why this correction, and what difference do words make, when the heart gives them all the same meaning?

The Diary

Two days ago I went to La Chevrette in order to see to some things there before settling-in with my children. I had sent Rousseau word that I was coming, and he came to see me. I think he needs me, and solitude, I fancy, has already made him cantankerous. He grumbles at everyone. Diderot is always coming and never does come to see him, M. Grimm neglects him, Baron d'Holbach forgets him, Gauffecourt and I are the only ones who trouble about him, so he says. I tried to stand up for them, but no good. I hope he will be very much more at La Chevrette than at the Hermitage. I am sure that there is only one way to take that man if one is to please him, and that is to pretend to let him entirely alone, and really to be fussing about him everlastingly, and therefore I did not press him to stay when he said that he must get back to the Hermitage, although it was late and the weather was bad. I asked him how he was going to occupy himself. He says that he intends to go back to his music-copying as he can make a living by it, and likes the work. "I hope you will give me your custom, and get me that of your friends," he added,

" but with me it does not do to want a thing in a hurry, for I can only copy when I'm in the mood, and when I don't feel like doing anything else." By way of a beginning M. d'Epinay and I have asked him to do a dozen copies.

The Diary

I gave M. Grimm yesterday an exact account of the way I intend to deal with Rousseau and begged him to second my efforts. He began to laugh. " How little you know your Rousseau," said he. " Take all he says the other way round, if you want to please him: hardly take any notice of him, but always pretend to take a great deal: talk about him incessantly to other people, even before him, and don't be taken in when he is cross with you for doing so."

I could not help being a little shocked at hearing him indulging in satire at the expense of his unfortunate friend and for the first time I thought him unfair. He added: " Moreover, I strongly urge you, Madame, to do your utmost to dissuade him from spending next winter at the Hermitage: I tell you it will send him mad: but apart from that consideration it would be pure barbarity to make old Le Vasseur stay for six months in a place quite cut off in bad weather, with no assistance at hand, without neighbours, without distractions or resources: it would be inhuman."

" I hope," said I, " that it will be sufficient to merely suggest this idea, for him to decide to spend the winter among human kind."

CHAPTER XI

1756–1757

Madame d'Epinay wrote to M. de Lisieux of her quiet life at La Chevrette, of her mother, who was ageing visibly, of M. Grimm, near whom it was impossible to live for any length of time without feeling within oneself an increased love of virtue. Mlle Le Vasseur had told her that Diderot and M. Grimm, between them, gave her and her mother an annuity of a hundred livres which matter Grimm himself had never mentioned.

Yesterday when we were out walking he (M. Grimm) and Rousseau had a little discussion which was not really intended to be taken seriously. Rousseau made as if he took it in good part, but he was upset inwardly, or I am much mistaken. He had brought M. d'Epinay the copies he had done for him, and M. d'Epinay asked him if he could do him another dozen within the fortnight. He replied, "Perhaps yes, perhaps no: it'll depend on my mood, temper and health." "In that case," said M. d'Epinay, "I shall only give you six to do, because I must be certain of having them." "Oh, well," answered M. Rousseau, "you will have the satisfaction of having six which will take the shine out of the other half dozen, for I defy you to obtain other copies that will be as exact and perfect as mine." "Do you see," said Grimm laughing, "how he prides himself on his copying already? If you were to say that there was not a comma missing in any of your writings, everyone

would agree with you, but I'll wager that there are several notes transposed in your copies." Rousseau coloured, as he laughed and took up the challenge, and he coloured more deeply still when, on examination, it appeared that M. Grimm was right. He remained pensive and depressed for the rest of the evening, and this morning went back to the Hermitage without saying a word.

M. de Lisieux came to spend some time at La Chevrette with Madame d'Epinay. While he was there, Diderot asked Grimm if he would come to Paris to help him with the revision of a book that he had just finished and which he did not wish to send to press before showing it to him and Rousseau. M. Grimm, who had intended to spend his autumn quietly at La Chevrette, proposed, with his hostess' permission, that Diderot should come there for a week. Diderot refused in absolute terror, and Grimm was hurt and vexed to see that the unfortunate impression made on Diderot's mind by Duclos' statements still remained. He made some excuse to Madame d'Epinay and it was arranged that he and Diderot should dine with Rousseau at the Hermitage, and that Grimm should take the MS. to La Chevrette afterwards and read it quietly there, and that there should be a second meeting of the three friends at Rousseau's house, when he had finished reading it.

It was November. His friends had tried to get Rousseau to make up his mind to quit the Hermitage during the winter. He at first made fun of their advice, then he got angry.

Letter from Rousseau to Madame d'Epinay

I begin by telling you that I am resolved and determined, come what may, to spend the winter at the Hermitage, and that nothing will make me change

my mind, and that you have no right to try and make me do so, according to the arrangement between us when I came. So not another word on the subject, except to give you my reasons in a couple of words.

For my work this winter, it is essential that I should have leisure, tranquillity and be well stocked with all I require. For five months I have worked at providing for everything, so that I shall have nothing to distract me from my work. I have laid in wood, got in my provisions, have collected and arranged my papers and books so as to have them ready to hand. I have amply provided myself with comforts in case of illness. It is only by managing in this way that I can get leisure, and it is absolutely necessary for me to plan out the time that I simply must devote to work. A removal, as I know by experience, cannot be accomplished, even with your assistance, without loss, damage and cost to myself, and this I cannot stand a second time. If I remove everything, what a terrible bother! If I leave anything behind, I shall feel the miss of it, or someone will come here and steal it, this winter, and to one in my position, time and my needful possessions are more precious than life. But do not imagine that I run any risk here: . . . I promise you that I will never go far without taking precautions, in fact, I do not anticipate walking further than the garden all the winter: anyone wishing to attack me here will have to lay siege to the place. As an extra precaution, I shall always get a neighbour to sleep in the house, and as soon as you let me have some weapons, I shall never go out without a pistol, even when I'm only walking just round the house. . . . Say no more, my friend, you will only distress me, and gain nothing, for contradiction is deadly to me, and I am very properly determined.

So all expostulations, including those of Gauffecourt and Grimm, were in vain. Rousseau, so

Madame d'Epinay said, still owed M. Grimm a grudge for having detected mistakes in his copies, and he grumbled to Countess d'Houdetot that Grimm talked against him to them.

Countess d'Houdetot stayed at La Chevrette, and she brought her sister-in-law—"a fat little woman, very high and mighty, very nice to her sister-in-law, and very exacting with others. Her name (said Madame d'Epinay) is Madame de Blainville. I love the Countess with all my heart, but when she is surrounded with her dogs and Madame de Blainville, I could wish for someone else."

Letter from Rousseau to Madame d'Epinay

My dear Friend, *13th December*

I shall choke if I do not disburden my woes on the bosom of friendship. Diderot has written me a letter that cuts me to the heart. He gives me to understand that I may think myself lucky that he does not regard me as a scoundrel and "*a deal could be said for it if he did.*" Those are his very words, and why, do you suppose? Because Madame Le Vasseur is with me. Eh, good Lord, what more could he say, if she wasn't? I took the pair of them, her and her husband, out of the streets, when they were both past earning their livings. She never did more than three months' work for me. For ten years I've taken the bread out of my own mouth for her. I take her to a healthy place where she has all she wants. I give up going to my own country for her sake. She is entirely her own mistress, and goes and comes as she pleases. I look after her as if she were my own mother: and all that goes by the board, and I'm nothing more or less than a scoundrel, if I don't make a further sacrifice of my life and happiness to her and go and break my heart in Paris, to please her. Alas, the poor woman

doesn't want it at all: she makes no complaint: she is perfectly contented. But I see what it is. M. Grimm won't be satisfied till he has deprived me of every friend I've given him. Philosophers of the City, if this is what you call virtuous conduct, you make me glad that I am a mere villain. I was happy in my retreat: solitude is no hardship to me: little do I fear poverty: I care not if the world forgets me. I bear my woes with patience—but to love and only find ungrateful hearts —ah! that's the one thing I cannot bear! Forgive me, dear friend, my heart is overwhelmed with trouble, and my eyes are swollen with tears that cannot flow. If I could but see you for a moment and weep and be comforted! But never in my life will I set foot in Paris again—this time I've sworn it. . . . I was forgetting to tell you that the Philosopher actually joked a bit in his letter: he is rapidly becoming quite a giddy barbarian: evidently he is getting civilised.

Madame d'Epinay's reply to Rousseau

If your complaints of M. Diderot, my friend, are no better founded than your suspicions regarding M. Grimm, I pity you, for you will certainly have much cause for self-reproach. Either be fairer to the latter, or don't expect me to listen to complaints that are insulting to a man for whom you ought to entertain a very much higher esteem and for whom I have the highest possible regard.

If I were not kept here by a very bad cold, I should come at once to see you, and bring you all the consolation that you rightly expect from my friendship. I cannot believe that M. Diderot told you, point blank, that he considered you a scoundrel: there must certainly be some misunderstanding. My friend, do guard against letting a vexing word, heard when all alone, and taken in bad part, simmer in your mind.

Believe me, beware of being unfair: besides, what does the wording matter, when the motive is dear to the heart? Can a friend ever offend one? Is not our interest, our welfare, our happiness always what he has in view? Possibly some little hastiness of temper on your part may have given rise to a remark which only seems to mean what you suppose, because it is separated from the text of the letter to which it is written in reply. How can I tell? Not having seen your letters, nor those of M. Diderot, I cannot judge, nor draw any conclusions: all I know is that M. Diderot has a sincere friendship for you. You, yourself, have told me so a hundred times. I am distressed at being unable to come to you. Still, it is not so much my actual presence, as the necessity and comfort of unbosoming yourself to a friend who feels your troubles as keenly as you do yourself, that will do you good. If my letter can give your tears vent, and bring you calm, I feel sure that things will look quite different. Good day: send me your letters, and always read on Diderot's—this important heading, *In friendship's name*. That is the real secret of taking his supposed insults in their proper sense.

Letter from Rousseau to Madame d'Epinay

See, Madame, here are Diderot's letters and my last in reply. Read and judge for yourself, for I am too sore, too furiously indignant to see clear.

I have just told Madame Le Vasseur that pleasant as it would be for both of us to live together, my friends consider that it is too uncomfortable here for a woman of her age, and that she must go and live with her children in Paris, and that I shall give my all to her and her daughter. Thereupon her daughter started crying, and despite her grief at the thought of parting from her mother, she protested that she would

never leave me, and, in truth, let the Philosophers say what they will, I shall not force her to do so. This means that I must keep something back to support her and myself. So I told Madame Le Vasseur that I will make her an allowance as long as she lives and this I shall do. I also told her that I should ask you to settle what the amount shall be, and this I ask you to do. Don't be afraid of putting it too high. I shall be the gainer in any case, if only in personal freedom.

The most awful thing for me in all this business is that the good woman has taken it into her head that the whole thing is a put-up job between Diderot, myself, and her daughter, as a means—invented by me—of getting rid of her. She made one very apt remark on the subject—namely, that having spent part of the winter here, it is hard that she should have to go just when spring is coming! I told her that I agreed with her, but were the slightest thing to happen to her in the summer, I should be promptly held responsible. The public at large, I added, would not say so, but my friends would, and I have not the courage to risk being called an assassin by them.

A fortnight ago we were living peacefully here in perfect harmony: now here we are, all of us scared, upset, weeping, forced to part. I assure you that this will be a lesson to me never to meddle in my friends' domestic affairs, unless I know all about them, and then with the utmost caution, and I am very uncertain as to whether I ought to write to M. d'Epinay on behalf of poor Cahouet.

As Diderot tells me that he is coming here on Saturday, it is important that this letter be sent to him at once. If he comes he will be received properly, but my heart will be shut against him, and I feel that we shall be seeing each other for the last time. Little will he care: I shall be but one friend the less to him: but

I shall lose all, and be miserable for the rest of my days. Once more, I have discovered to my cost that mine is not the heart to forget that which it once held dear. Let us avoid, if possible, any irreconcilable rupture. I am so terribly worried that I thought it well to send you this by special messenger, so as to get a reply in time. Send on the letter to Diderot by the same messenger, and write me by return if you have any pity for me.

P.S. I should add that Madame Le Vasseur at present reproaches me violently: she takes the harsh and high tone of one who feels she is well backed up. I make no answer nor does her daughter, we content ourselves with sighing in silence. I perceive that old folk are hard, pitiless, without bowels of compassion, and love no one but themselves. You see, I can't get out of being a monster: I am a monster in M. Diderot's eyes if Madame Le Vasseur stays here, and a monster in her eyes if she does not stay. Whatever course I take, behold me bad—in spite of myself.

Letter from Rousseau to Madame d'Epinay

I received your letter, my kind friend, an hour after I sent you the letters you asked for, by special messenger. I am not a man of caution, above all in dealing with my friends, and I have kept no copies of my letters. You rightly thought that your letter would touch me—I swear to you, my dear friend, that your friendship is dearer to me than life, and consoles me for all.

I have nothing to say to your observations with regard to Diderot's good intentions, save one thing only—but ponder it well. He knows my hasty temper and how sensitive I am. Say I was in fault: undoubtedly he was the aggressor, and it was for him to offer the suitable olive branch: one word, one kind word, and my pen would have tumbled from my

fingers, and with tears in my eyes I should have been at his feet. Instead of that, look at the tone of the second letter and see how he piles on the harshness of the first. If he had intended to break with me, could he have acted differently? Believe me, my dear friend, Diderot is now a society man. There was a time when we were both poor and unknown, and we were friends. I can say the same of Grimm. But both have now become important persons: I have stayed as I was, and we no longer get on together.

However, I am inclined to think that I have been unfair to the latter, and not for the first time. But if you want to know what my inner feeling has always been towards him, I would draw your attention to a word in the note you had from me to-day, which will not have escaped you. But all these folk are so high and mighty, so mannered, so withered. How can one love them, now? No, my dear friend, my day is over. Alas, I am reduced to wishing for their sakes that we may never be friends again. Nothing but adversity will give them back their one-time love for me. Then think how dear to me is the friendship extended by you—you who have never needed this cruel lesson to teach you the price of friendship.

Above all, let us hope Diderot does not turn up! But I ought to feel safe: he has promised to come.

The Diary

The letter which Rousseau wrote M. Diderot was all abuse and miserable wrangling, whereas, with a little moderation, he would have come out best, for as a matter of fact some of the letters he received were a bit stiff. It can't be denied that simple straightforwardness would have avoided any upset at all. Diderot's notion of getting his friend to realise what might happen to his old housekeeper, was to conjure up before him the remorse he would feel were the

slightest accident to befall her—remorse that would be all the sharper for the fact that poor Le Vasseur had had a presentiment of calamity, and old folk and people of that class attach such importance to presentiments. Diderot's imagination led him to behold worthy Le Vasseur on her deathbed, holding forth in the most pathetic fashion: but the reasons he advanced in support of his tragic picture were feeble and puerile compared with those that Rousseau gave for not leaving the Hermitage. Thereupon he only sees him as ungrateful, an assassin, unworthy of his esteem: he persuades himself that all that might be, is, and tells him straight out that he is a barbarian (those two letters of Diderot's are really highly poetic). But, apart from this, it is really too bad of Rousseau to let a woman of seventy-five to whom he is a good deal indebted, whatever he may say, be in a state of apprehension. The whole thing has just been a matter of poetic exaggeration. So I have just told Rousseau that I advise him not to send his letter unless he really wants to put himself in the wrong, and, instead, to send Diderot a frank invitation to come and see him, and then they can have it all out openly, in friendly fashion, for at bottom they really are friendly. I even added that if Diderot cannot go to the Hermitage, Rousseau should go to Paris to him. I have urged him to do so as I feel sure that it will lead to a reconciliation with Diderot, who complains of Rousseau's first reply to him with even more cause than Rousseau has to complain of his letters. My mother has been ill for two days, otherwise I should have been to see him. This is just about the gist of a very long letter I wrote him.

Letter from Rousseau to Madame d'Epinay

I shall not send my letter to Diderot since you would rather I did not. But feeling myself so deeply offended, it would be mean and false in me to admit

a wrong that I have not committed and this I cannot bring myself to do and you would blame me if I did, seeing how I feel in my heart about it. The Gospel bids him who has received a blow, turn the other cheek, but not to beg pardon. Do you remember the man in the play who cries " Murder " while he administers a thrashing—that's just the Philosophers' style!

Don't think that bad weather will keep him from coming. He would be very put out if it were fine. Anger will give him the time and strength that friendship denies him: he will wear himself out coming on foot to repeat the insulting things that he has said in his letters to me. I shall stand them very patiently: he will return to Paris, ill through it all, and everyone will think me a most odious man. Patience! One must bear things. Don't you admire the sweet reasonableness of the man—seeing how he wanted to come and take me to St Denis in a cab—dine there, and bring me back by cab, and now a week later, he can't afford to come to the Hermitage except on foot? To talk as he does, I don't say that one is bound to swerve from strict veracity, but if not, then his fortunes must have undergone some strange revolutions within a week. Oh Philosophy!

I sympathise with your distress in regard to your mother's illness, but believe me, your grief comes nowhere near mine. One suffers less from seeing one's loved ones lying sick than finding them unjust and cruel.

Adieu, my good friend; now, this is the last time that I shall refer to this wretched affair.

The calm way you suggest my going to Paris would have delighted me at any other time. I take for granted all the nice things to be said about that—but all the same I shall never go to Paris again, and I bless Heaven for having created me Bear, Hermit, and obstinate, rather than a Philosopher.

Letter from Madame d'Epinay to Rousseau

And you say that my letter did you good? The one you have just sent me is more unjust, and more full of animosity than the others. My friend, you are in no state to know yourself. Your head is in too much of a ferment. Solitude is killing you, and I begin to repent of having given you the opportunity of shutting yourself up alone. You think you have been badly treated by M. Diderot whose only crime is that he expressed himself with even more than his usual warmth, and whose only intention was to get you back among your friends: he had vainly exhausted all arguments relative to your health, safety, and well-being: he then struck a chord that at any other time would have been the very one to touch you—by referring to the peace of mind of a woman of seventy-five who had been good enough to take to the solitary life in order to be with you. He possibly imagined that she was secretly lamenting the prospect of spending the winter beyond the reach of aid: it was very natural and you make it out a crime on his part! My friend, you grieve me; the state you are in fills me with sorrow: for if you had said to me, in cold blood, all that you said in your letters . . . No, you are ill, you must indeed be ill. Eh, who can say but that what has befallen M. Diderot will not happen to me some day? One owes the truth to one's friends at all times: woe to those who dare not hear it. You are not the man to misinterpret the language of truth and you do not deserve friends who are capable of hurting you, when you are your own true self. Be your own true self once more, and quickly, and prepare to open your arms to your friend, who, from what I hear, is not likely to be long in throwing himself into them.

Letter from Rousseau to Madame d'Epinay

What has given you the idea that I shall be complaining of you next? If I had anything to complain of, it would be that you humour me too much, and treat me too kindly. What I more often require is to be pitched into. I quite like a scolding when I deserve it. I think I am quite the sort of person to regard it sometimes as a kind of friendly cajolery. But one can have a row with a friend, without treating him with contempt: one can tell him straight out that he's a fool, but not that he's a rascal. You will never tell me that you consider that it's a great kindness on your part to think well of me at all. You will never hint to me that a close inspection into my character would involve considerable lessening of esteem. You will never say to me—"And surely, a deal more could be said on the subject?" That would not merely be insulting to me but insulting to yourself, for it does not behove decent bodies to have friends of whom they have a low opinion. But if I had happened to misunderstand anything you had said on this subject, you would certainly have hastened to explain to me what you had meant, and would not have persisted in harshly and coldly reiterating the same remarks, so that they conveyed exactly the same unfortunate impression as before. Surely, Madame, you don't call this—mere form—exterior?

Since we are on this topic, I should like to tell you what I demand of friendship and what I, on my side, am willing to give. Don't be afraid to find fault with my rule for friendship, but don't expect me to be easily turned from it, for it is the result of my temperament which I cannot alter.

Firstly, I want my friends to be my friends and not my masters: to advise me but not try to rule me: to have every claim upon my heart but none upon my

liberty. I consider it extraordinary—the way people interfere, in friendship's name, in my affairs, without telling me of theirs.

I wish them to speak out frankly and freely to me—to say anything they like to me: contempt excepted, I permit all. To the scorn of one indifferent to me I am indifferent, but if I stood it from a friend I should deserve it. If he is so unfortunate as to scorn me let him not tell me so, but let him drop me—'tis his duty towards himself. With this one exception—he has a right to expostulate with me, no matter what tone he takes, and I, having listened to what he has to say, have a right to take it or leave it: and I don't care to be nagged continually about a thing that's past and done with.

Their great eagerness to do me a thousand services wearies me: there is a touch of patronage about it that annoys me: besides, anyone else could do as much. I would rather that they should just love me and let me love them: that's the one thing a friend is for. Especially does it make me indignant when any new-comer can take my place with them, whilst, in all the world, they are the only ones whose society I can stand. It is only their affection that makes me endure their kindnesses: but when I do bring myself to accept their kindness I do wish that they would consult my tastes and not their own, for we think so differently on so many points, that often what they consider good, I consider bad.

If there should happen to be a falling out, I say distinctly that it is for him who is in fault to offer the olive branch first, but that means nothing, for we all think we are in the right: right or wrong, he who began the quarrel should end it. If I take his censure ill, if I get vexed unreasonably, if I get angry without good cause, it is not for him to follow my example: he does not love me, if he does. On the contrary, I would have him be very loving with me, and embrace

me tenderly, do you see, Madame? In a word, let him commence by appeasing me, and that assuredly will not take long, for never was there a conflagration in my heart that a tear could not quench. Then, when I am melted, calmed, ashamed, covered with confusion, let him rate me well, and tell me straight where I'm wrong, and assuredly he will be satisfied with me. If it is simply a matter of some trifle not worth going into, then let the matter drop, and let the aggressor be the first to hold his peace, and not make it a stupid point of honour always to have the last word. That's how I would have my friend act towards me, and how I am always prepared to act towards him in like case.

In this connection I would cite a little instance, of which you have no suspicion, although it has to do with you. It is with regard to a note that I received from you some time back, in answer to one of mine, which I saw you had not quite liked, and of which you had not, I thought, quite understood the meaning. I wrote a fairly good reply, or at least I thought so, its tone was certainly quite friendly, but at the same time there was, undeniably, a dash of quick temper about it, and on re-reading it, I feared that you would be no better pleased with it than with the former. Promptly I threw it on the fire, and I cannot tell you how relieved I was to see my eloquence consumed in the flames. I never told you, and I believe I had the honour of giving way. Sometimes, ever such a tiny spark will set a big blaze alight. My dear kind friend, it was Pythagoras who said that one should never poke the fire with a sword: a saying which seems to me to embody a most important and sacred law of friendship.

I demand of a friend more even than all I have so far stated, more even than he must demand of me and than I should demand of him were he in my place, and I in his. As a recluse, I am more sensitive than other men. Suppose I fall out with one who lives

amid the throng,—he thinks of the matter for a moment, then a hundred and one distractions will make him forget it for the rest of the day. But nothing takes my thoughts off it. Sleepless, I think of it all night long, walking by myself, I think of it from sunrise to sunset: my heart has not an instant's respite and a friend's unkindness will cause me to suffer, in a single day, years of grief. As an invalid, I have a right to the indulgence due from his fellow-men to the little weaknesses and temper of a sick man. What friend, what decent body, would not shrink from wounding an unhappy creature afflicted with an incurable and painful malady? I am poor and my poverty (or so it seems to me) entitles me to some consideration. All the little indulgences that I demand, you have shown me without my ever having mentioned them, and surely a true friend would never need to be asked, but, my dear friend—to put it frankly—do you know any who are friends of mine? My word! lucky for me that I've learnt to do without them. I know many a one who would not be sorry were I under an obligation to him, and there's many a one to whom I am under obligation—but of hearts fit to respond to mine! —Ah, 'tis enough to have known one.

So do not be surprised if I hate Paris yet more and more. Nothing for me but vexation, out of Paris, except your letters. Never shall I be seen there again. If you care to state your views on this subject, and just as vigorously as you like, well, you have the right to do so. They will be taken in good part and will be—useless. After that—you won't try again. . . .

Letter from Madame d'Epinay to Rousseau

I think, my friend, that it is very difficult to lay down hard-and-fast rules for friendship, for we all of us, very naturally, make rules according to our own way of

thinking. You tell me what you expect of your friends: presently a friend of mine comes along who wants something totally different: and the result is that I, who have quite a different temperament, will be contriving some ten times a day to make my friends curse me, while I, on my side, of course, will wish them to the devil. There are two general rules—essential and indispensable in friendship, to which everyone must subscribe—tolerance and liberty. There's no tie that will not snap without these two things, and that—or practically that—is my code, in a nutshell. I should not demand from a friend a love that is hot, tender, well-pondered, or effusive, but I simply ask him to love me as best he can, according to his temperament, for all my wishing will not alter him, be he reserved, fickle, grave or gay, and to be for ever dwelling on some quality that he lacks, and which I am set on his possessing, would result in my not being able to stand him. See—we should love our friends as true lovers of Art love pictures: they keep their eyes fixed on the good points and do not notice the others.

If a quarrel should arise, you say, if my friend treats me badly, etc., etc. Oh! I don't understand this talk of "my friend has treated me badly". In friendship I know but one bad treatment—mistrust. But when you say—one day he keeps things from me—another day he prefers this or that to the pleasure of my society or to paying me proper attention—or he should have given up that for me. And then there are black looks! Oh, leave these petty complaints to the empty-hearted and empty-headed! They're only for silly little, vulgar lovers, who go in for petty, low, mean quarrels which make them narrow-minded and sour-tempered, and paltry if not vicious, instead of being trustful and confident, and bubbling over with affection and so, like upright and high-hearted persons, grow more loving through being philosophic and

virtuous. Does it become a philosopher, a friend of wisdom, to do as faint-hearted, narrow-minded devotees do, who substitute their miserable little superstitions for the true love of God? Believe me, he who really understands human nature will not find it hard to pardon his fellow-creatures' weaknesses, and will love them for their good deeds, knowing how hard it is to be good.

Your rules for friendship, coming just after your quarrel with Diderot, remind me somewhat of the regulations which the English nation invariably adopt, when some crisis reveals a defect in their laws which is at the root of the trouble, and which, not having been foreseen, cannot be remedied immediately.

As for me, my friend, when, at the beginning of my letter, I laid down liberty and tolerance as fundamental principles, I did not anticipate permitting myself so much of the one, and requiring so much of the other. Forgive me my impertinence, for the sake of my sincerity. My God! what a host of excellent things I have still left unsaid, but I get interrupted every two minutes. I have only time to whisper to you that I defy you, in spite of my naughty teasings, to be cross with me: for with all your faults, I love you with all my heart!

The Diary

M. Grimm and I discussed Rousseau. He thinks that he expressed himself rather less heatedly in talking to Diderot than he did in his letters to me on the subject. The conversation led us on to various reflections, and he made one remark in answer to something I said which struck me as very true. "It surprises me," I was saying to him, "how seldom people display any forbearance." "Oh, no, not surprising at all," he said, "the lack of forbearance proceeds from the mistaken idea of imagining ourselves free agents: our established code of morality is false and erroneous in that it is based on this false principle of liberty."

" I can see that," I said, " but the reverse, if it led to greater tolerance, would lead to disorder too." " Not at all. If human nature does not change, it can be modified, amended. Punishments may therefore have a salutary effect. The gardener does not cut down the tree which is growing askew: he ties the branch and constrains it. You have the same effect in the punishments inflicted by the Law."

That was the gist of our conversation. The kindliness and truth of this moral outlook completely convinced me.

Note from Madame d'Epinay to Rousseau

I am sending, my Hermit, a few things for Mesdames Le Vasseur, and as I have a new messenger now, here is a list of what he is bringing: a little barrel of salt, a curtain for Madame Le Vasseur's room, and a quite new under-petticoat of mine (at least I have never worn it) made of silk-flannel, which could be made into a petticoat for her or a good waistcoat for you. Good day, King of Bears. Send me word of yourself.

Letter from Rousseau to Madame d'Epinay

The roads are so bad that I have decided to send my letter to you by post, and you will be able to do the same, for my letters are brought here from Montmorency, and therefore, as far as the post is concerned, I'm as well off here as if I were in Paris.

It is frightfully cold here, and my stock of wood is diminishing rather early in the season, but this foretaste of winter proves to me that, for all they say, the season is no worse here than anywhere else, except for the absence of friends: but one has the consolation of looking forward to having them once more when Spring comes, or at least to seeing them again,

for, long since, you have taught me that there's a friend at need in all seasons.

For God's sake, keep this dear piece of nonsense, unlooked-for treasure that Heaven has been good enough to give you, and of which you stand much in need: for if it makes the mind rheumaticy, it is an excellent, healthy plaster for the body. It'll take many such attacks of rheumatism to utterly cripple you, and I would rather have you unable to move hand or foot—that is to say unable to write either verse or comedy—than to know you had the headache. . . .

Diderot still disregarded all overtures on Madame d'Epinay's part and refused to make her acquaintance on any pretext. However, when in January, 1757, Gauffecourt had an attack of apoplexy and Madame d'Epinay went to Paris to look after him, she at last met the philosopher, and described the meeting in a letter to Rousseau:

"I have seen M. Diderot, and had I not been an imbecile he would certainly have dined with me. But I think that poor Gauffecourt has inoculated me mentally with his gout or rheumatism, besides, I can never worry or force people, so I am pretty sure that I shall see no more of him, in spite of all his promises to come and see me. But I must tell you about this meeting. I was worried about our friend whom I left very poorly yesterday evening, and I got up early this morning and was with him before nine o'clock. Baron d'Holbach and M. Diderot were there. The latter got up to go directly he saw me. I seized him by the arm: 'Ah!' said I, 'I cannot let such a good chance slip.' He came back, and I can only say that I never spent a pleasanter two hours in my life.

"There are no doubt many mistakes in spelling, in this note, but you will find still more in the 'plots'[1] that I am going to submit to you."

[1] MS. that she had sent him.

Letter from Rousseau to Madame d'Epinay

You shall be let off for sending the petticoat—but the salt! Did ever woman combine warmth of heart and wisdom? You'll end by putting me all wrong, and I shall never get right again. Haven't you done enough to please yourself—now do something to please me, and let me love you in my own way.

Oh, you're a fine hand at excuses! Ah! this precious rheumatism? . . .

So you have seen the man at last. Well—that's something gained: for I agree with you in thinking that it's all you will get out of him. I can guess, however, what a "perfumed bear"[1] will have to say to you, on the effect of this first conversation, but my opinion is that the Diderot of the morning will always be meaning to come and see you, and that the Diderot of the evening will not have seen you. You know he too gets rheumatism sometimes, and when he's not soaring on two great wings towards the sun, he's to be found on a heap of weeds crippled hand and foot. Believe me, if you have another petticoat to spare, you had better send it to him. I did not know that Father Gauffecourt was ill. . . .

Still more plots? Devil take the plots, "*plan plan relantanplan*," a plot is a very fine thing, I daresay, but put in some detail and some dramatic scenes: that's all that's needed to make a play go when it's read and sometimes even when it's acted. God forbid you compose one good enough for that!

I reread your letter to search for errors in spelling, and could not find a single one, though I doubt not there were some. I am not vexed with you for having made some but for having noticed them. I thought of making some myself on purpose to shame you, and forgot all about it when I was writing.

[1] Grimm, who was a fop.

Apropos of health, I don't know about the spelling of this scrappy note, but it doesn't seem to make much sense, so I begin to think that I should have done better had I made a good thick cap out of your petticoat instead of a waistcoat, for I think my rheumatism is in the head and not in the heart. . . .

In answer to a letter in which she begged him to come and see Gauffecourt, who wanted particularly to see him, Rousseau wrote to Madame d'Epinay:

"All three of us are invalids here, and I doubt which of us needs looking after most. I am leaving, in mid-winter, in the wilds of the woods, those whom I brought here, under promise of never abandoning them. The roads are frightful, and one sinks up to one's knees in the mud. Out of all the two hundred friends that M. Gauffecourt has in Paris, it is odd that the only one he wants is a poor invalid, weighed down with his own ailments. I leave you to ponder this: I am going to wait for two days, to try and get better myself, and to give the roads a chance to dry up a bit. I expect to leave on Friday if it does not rain or snow, but I am quite unfit to go on foot to Paris or even to St Denis, and the trouble is that the carriage is bound to upset me in my present condition. However, if (weather permitting) your carriage is at the gate of M. de Luxembourg's place, on Friday at eleven o'clock sharp, I will come by it: if not, I shall foot it as best I may, and shall arrive when it may please God. Moreover, I shall expect some reward for my journey, and I demand a little gratuity[1] in return: if you refuse it, you who can do all things, I shall never forgive you.

"I should like to dine with you and sleep at Diderot's. I do also find amid my woes a certain consolation in the thought of spending a few quiet evenings with our

[1] This refers to a post in the Excise which Rousseau wished to obtain for someone.

poor friend. As for business[1]—I know nothing of business, and I don't want to hear anything about it, under any pretext whatever. So please be prepared for that. Here is a parcel and a letter that please have sent to Diderot. Good day, my good friend. All the time I squabble with you, I pity you, esteem you, and cannot think, without emotion, of all the zeal and constancy which you require, surrounded as you are by sick and sorry friends, who depend upon you for courage and consolation."

As soon as Gauffecourt was convalescent, Rousseau, unable to stand the patient's friends, took himself back again to the Hermitage, and wrote Madame d'Epinay: "For the love of God, clear the lot out—Counts—Abbés—fine ladies, and the Devil take them!"

[1] Gauffecourt had wished to consult him on some business matter.

CHAPTER XII

1757

Letter from Madame d'Epinay to M. de Lisieux

Oh, Monsieur, my kind friend, my father, come and help me, give me courage, do not leave me to myself. I fear myself: I want to be generous and I can't be. Pleased as I am that M. Grimm should be thought so much of, my grief is not stilled, nor are my eyes shut to the perils attached to the distinction accorded him. I am unfair, unreasonable, in my weakness, but how can one lose a friend, unmoved? Yes, Monsieur, he is going away: I ought to urge him on, I ought to be very glad, I ought . . . I ought to think, act and feel in a manner contrary to nature. No, I cannot: there! I find it impossible to write, I am so unhappy.

The Duc d'Orléans had offered M. Grimm the position of secretary to Maréchal d'Estrées who was in command of the army in Westphalia, and to whom Grimm's knowledge of languages would be useful. Grimm's acceptance of the post and his consequent absence was a great grief to Madame d'Epinay.

Count d'Houdetot was serving in the army as Major-General and, as usual, had wanted his wife to go to his estate during his absence. But the family were opposed to this, and her ill-health was a good excuse for her remaining in or near Paris. He therefore took a small house for her between the Hermitage and La Chevrette.

The Diary

I saw Diderot to-day at Baron d'Holbach's. He paid me so many compliments, and said so much twaddle about my ascendancy over my friends that I feel pretty certain that he takes me for something very different from what I am. The desire to dominate is far from me, and I have no wish to shine. I tried to suggest this tactfully to him, but perhaps he only took it for another sign of my artfulness.

. . . I found a letter from Rousseau, whom I had told of Grimm's impending departure. " I congratulate my old friend Grimm," he said, " but the favour of the great always entails inconvenience. Apparently he has nicely managed things, to suit himself. I pity him more than you, Madame."

Letter from M. Grimm to Madame d'Epinay [1]

(*Written just before starting*)

After expressing his deep sorrow in leaving her, M. Grimm proceeded, practically:

Very dear to me is the feeling you manifest, but it must not be allowed to develop into exaggerated grief and so make you unable to submit to the call of Duty. Your duty is to take care of yourself, for your mother's sake, for your children's sake and for the sake of your most loving friend. Remember that his happiness is bound up in your life and in your well-being. Recall, often, our last talks together, the subjects we spoke of and the conclusions we came to. Remember the courage, firmness and high-mindedness required to deal with the difficulties of your position. My friend, 'tis not from tears that you will draw the needful energy. Do not let your husband behave as he should not to your children or servants: put up, rather, with

[1] He left this letter in his room for her.

unmerited treatment yourself, provided it is not of any particular consequence, and is likely to conduce to your own peace and quiet. That, speaking generally, is the course for you to pursue.

Then, I am leaving you amid friends: you can, if you like, lead a very happy, pleasant life. The Baron has a nice circle of friends, and you will be much in demand there, and as they know how to appreciate you, I see no objection to your enjoying their society. You will all of you be the gainers, through becoming better acquainted, especially if my loving friend will only bethink herself that it does not do to place the same boundless confidence in all friends alike. A little prudence on this score may be recommended to so straight and frank a soul as yours, without offence. You ought to find Margency[1] useful: he is pleasant and amusing. I am surprised that you did not respond more readily to the friendly advances of the Marquis de Croismare, and that you received him coldly when he was introduced to you. He is a man of distinct merit. I should be very glad to see him included in your circle. Won't you tell me, when you have nothing else to do, what you think of them all? Forget what we have said about them, and judge of them for yourself: do keep your mind employed, please. Adieu, good-bye, then, my friend. How sweet it was to say the word each evening—and how hard it is to say it now!

Letter from Madame d'Epinay to M. Grimm

I am not a bit used to it, and I do not think I shall ever get used to it. Ten times this morning I was on the point of sending to you. I pity you, my friend, almost as much as I pity myself. You will be surrounded by folk who will have no thought for your

[1] A friend of Baron d'Holbach's.

sorrow, while I am a little consoled by hearing everyone saying they are so glad that the Duke of Orleans is so good to you. Still, the more I see you are liked, the more I dread envy.

Well, my friend, so you would have me say: "He follows his calling, we must submit to our lot." How unavailing that reasoning is, and how little weight it has with me! You are so reasonable, so austere, that my confidence in you must be vast indeed, and I must be tremendously in the habit of telling you everything, to dare to disclose to you all the folly of my heart. As you told me one day, I do believe I shall be a child right up to the age when one does become a child once more. My friend, I am such a baby that I actually glory in the fact. I find it hard to forgive you for refusing me a certain portrait, relegated to your ante-room. It is true that it has rather a grimace but I should have found it such a comfort—that grimace: I should have been always on the look-out to see whether I had done or said anything amiss. But—enough of your portrait, my heart and its folly. I want to keep you so well posted in all that interests us, that you will sometimes think you have never left us.

She told him that M. d'Epinay wished to let La Chevrette, and that Baron d'Holbach was thinking of taking the place. She also said that she had become friendly with the Marquis de Croismare and gave the following sketch of his character:

"I should give him quite sixty years of age, though he does not look it. He is of medium height, and he must have been very nice-looking, for there is still a nobility and geniality about his face which invests his whole personality with charm. It is a shrewd face too. His gestures and attitudes are quite unstudied, but they harmonize so well with his bent of mind, that they seem to enhance its originality. He touches so

lightly on the most serious and most important matters, that one is tempted not to believe a word he says. He seldom says anything worth quoting, yet when he talks one does not want to miss what he is saying, and when he stops talking, one wants him to go on speaking. He is so tremendously keen, and has such a singular aptitude for picking up all sorts of accomplishments and information that he has managed to see and know all there is to be seen and known, and so, as you can gather, he is very well informed. He has read well, and observed well, and only retained what was worth retaining. Intellectually, he strikes one, at first, as having more surface charm than depth, but I think one would be doing him an injustice were one to call him frivolous. I fancy he keeps (locked up in his study) all the thorns of the roses he distributes in society. Cheery in public, I am inclined to think he is melancholy in private. They say that he is as warm-hearted as he is honourable, and that he has great feeling, and gives himself wholeheartedly to anyone who finds the way to his heart. He does not take to everyone: to be to his liking, one must be original, or have some very special good qualities or certain vices that he calls passions. At the same time, he is invariably adaptable. Great curiosity and an easy-going temperament (carried to positive weakness) often lead him to neglect his best friends, and lose sight of them, for passing fads and fancies. He joins with his friends in laughing at himself for it, but one can see, so plainly, that he is privately rather ashamed of it that one forgives him his little oddities."

Letter from Madame d'Epinay to M. Grimm

The Baron is going to take La Chevrette, I think. . . . Margency is delighted, for as Madame de

Verdelin's property is only eight miles from mine, it will be very convenient for him.

Really, were it not for the fact that you all seem to think Margency as honourable and good as he is pleasant, I should have thought him disagreeable and conceited. Anyway, he is flighty and indiscreet. I often heard him speak of the Mesdemoiselles d'Ars, and he has read us some letters from the elder, letters that were very well expressed but very impassioned, and so I concluded that this Madame de Verdelin was some mistress of his . . . I was very surprised, when I accidentally happened to hear that she is a lady of position, very pretty, very pleasant, very sensible, with nothing against her save the violent passion that she has unfortunately conceived for M. de Margency, and to which she sacrifices everything. Ah well! there's a woman compromised—in fact, done for—through a bad choice! They say—for the whole thing's common talk—that she resisted him for a long time. I do not know if you have heard this curious incident in their romance. One day when Margency was pressing her without success, and she was resisting him with the utmost firmness, he resorted to a show of anger which is only dangerous when feigned. "I see, Madame," he said, "you do not love me." She laughed at this, treating it as nonsense. He repeated it in the same tone, and still more vehemently. She looked at him in astonishment, reminding him of the danger she was running, her husband's jealousy, the horror of her very religious relations, of the dependent position in which need of the servants as allies would place her: nothing calmed Margency. She rose with the utmost coolness, took him by the hand, led him to her dressing-room. "Oh, well, Monsieur," said she, "enjoy yourself!" And he did or thought he did: just like the men! No—they are not all like that—some are not so selfish.

They say that it has been put to Madame de Verdelin many times that she was being compromised by Margency: she would never hear the slightest word against him. It is very fine but very foolish! Her sister is her confidante. That woman is, notwithstanding, very unlucky. It is all very well for her to make an idol of Margency, to take all her troubles to him as to her God (for her husband is an old man blind in one eye, infirm and nasty in every sense of the word, jealous and tyrannical), but she gets no return for it, as they say Margency, although he does full justice to Madame de Verdelin's good qualities, is not much in love with her. Still, she seems content: she says she loves him for himself, and as long as he is happy, she desires nothing more. But is this feeling right? I am far from such perfection. I do not think it is natural. Surely that woman is very romantic. The happiness of two who love is so intimately interwoven that it is but one. Both may have to make sacrifices at the call of Reason, Fate or Honour, but the grief is there all the same. No doubt one desires, above all, the happiness of the beloved, but one wants him to find that happiness in oneself: that is a right of which one is jealous in proportion to the extent to which one's own happiness is vested in him: and when one of the twain renounces that right, then farewell happiness or peace. The seeming calm that Time brings is a blank a thousand times more to be dreaded than Death. Oh! my friend, oh! you, whom Heaven has doubtless ordained to be the light of my soul and delight of my life, we have no such upheavals to fear. You will stick to your work. I shall adore, I shall revere the source of my own progress, and nothing in the universe can alter or sever the bond that unites us. . . .

Countess d'Houdetot came yesterday to bid me good-bye. She is a sweet soul, naive, sensitive, and

straight. She is mad with joy at her husband's departure, and really she is so charming that everyone rejoices with her. She was as lively as a kitten yesterday. The Marquis de Saint-Lambert was with her, and sent you tons of nice messages. He told me something very funny that he said to Rousseau when he was last in Paris. "Do you know," said the Marquis, "what is the difference between your feeling of friendship for me and mine for you? It is this—I take a delight in my longing for you—whereas you sometimes find yours for me a bit of a nuisance." That should have gone home—for it is true.

Letter from Madame d'Epinay to M. Grimm

At La Chevrette

The Baron is one of the greatest characters I know. . . . He promised when I left Paris to let me have his decision (with regard to taking La Chevrette) within a few days. This morning he turned up and said nothing about the house. I noticed that he looked uncomfortable and broke the ice by asking what he meant to do. "Alas," he said, looking very rueful, "I simply can't take a house in the country." "And why not?" "Well—I've never had one, and it would upset all my friends. I should not like to keep open house here, and I should run the risk of being alone all the winter."

"What nonsense! Do you mean to live like a hermit here, and not even see your friends?"

"No—but—look here—I give up the idea with great regret but—I must."

And then he pulled a face a yard long. "Well," I said, a little ruffled, "think no more of it, and above all, say no more about it."

"That's the best thing to do," said he, "since it must be given up, for I know no more attractive house.

Such a view! Such gardens! So nicely situated! And the water, and the rich meadows, and the pretty outlook. The high road a few yards off! Charming neighbourhood: one is in touch with everything here, and the house lies sufficiently by itself for one to be alone if one wants. Look at that view over there! Really you know it's quite like an English garden!"

I made no reply and went on sewing. He went to the window, and leaning over the balcony, mused for a good quarter of an hour, his opera-glass in his hand. Then he came up to me and said: "Well, haven't you anything to say to me? I would very much like to take the place, but they'll make my life a hell."

"Who will?"

"Oh, well, dash it! I must tell you the truth: I know what is at the bottom of it. Some people don't approve of our friendship. I can see you're vexed, but I could not blurt it out all at once."

"And why not, Monsieur? As long as you and Madame like our friendship, there's nothing to worry about, as far as I can see."

"That's so—but there will be bothers—and unpleasantness."

"But, Monsieur, haven't you any will of your own?"

"I know—but I don't want to fall out with people. They are my friends, and I do not want to fall out with my friends. Suppose I take this house, and they refuse to come here."

"Monsieur Le Baron, settle it all with your wife, and your friends, and be sure that, if you do not take my house, I shall bear you no ill-will on that account."

I did not think that there was anything more to be said. I felt perfectly sure that it was M. Diderot who had put the stumbling block in the way of the arrangement. After dinner the Baron suddenly came up to me and said, "I have made up my mind, Madame,

let's draw up the agreement and sign." I wanted to give him another twenty-four hours, but he would not have it. We signed the agreement, and he got me to promise to go to Paris on Monday to conclude the business.

After dinner we read Rousseau's manuscript.[1] I do not know whether I was not in the right mood, but I did not much care for it. It was wonderfully written, but the writing is overdone, and seems to me to lack reality and warmth. The characters do not say a word that they ought to say. It is always the Author who is speaking. . . .

In another letter

Countess d'Houdetot came to supper with us and brought her fat Madame de Blainville. The former came in like one distraught and the other like a silly. The Marquis de Saint-Lambert was with her. He had come to tell me that he is leaving to join the Army. Madame d'Houdetot is terribly upset about it, for she has not expected this. In vain we assured her that there was no likelihood of Saint-Lambert being in the danger zone: she with her vivid imagination and sensitiveness made the worst of it. She has no self-control and displays her grief with an openness, admirable in itself, but embarrassing for those who care for her. . . . My God! how I should like to put another ten years on that woman's head. If she could only manage to be rather more restrained, she would be an angel. But if her husband continues to cross her she will only remain frenzied the longer.

I notice in Margency something that is very common and yet that always strikes me as something new. It is this—that his mind and temperament are exercised in things that do not matter in the least.

[1] The MS. of *La Nouvelle Heloise* which Rousseau had lent her.

M. de Margency is merely a sketch or pocket-edition of everything that is agreeable—just a bundle of what is very good on a very tiny scale. A little time back I was admiring the view. I admired it as a whole, being only struck by the general effect: he confined himself purely to details. I gazed at the stately wood of Epinay: he would have liked to count the leaves. He looked at every single leaf. Anything a little out of the common would not appeal to him, and that is why he, unhesitatingly, prefers Racine to Corneille, opera to tragedy, and Grandison to Clarissa. . . .

Madame d'Epinay told Grimm that Baron d'Holbach had confirmed her suspicion that it was Diderot who had not wished him to take La Chevrette. But Grimm replied by bidding her "leave things to Time, and not to plague her bonny head with its beautiful eyes by worrying over what people said of her." As for Diderot, if he did not like her, the worse for himself. "Find resources in yourself," said Grimm, and added: "A piece of advice which I feel bound to give you is to proceed very carefully with Rousseau. For some time past I have had my doubts about his conduct towards you: he dare not speak ill of you, but he lets others say no good of you in his presence, and he does anything but stand up for you, and I do not like it. . . .

"The weather is frightful, nothing but rain, everything under water, and they say it is the sort of weather they always have here. . . ."

Letter from Madame d'Epinay to M. Grimm

Mlle Le Vasseur has just been to see me. She said that Rousseau, a few days ago, had a fearful row with M. Deleyre. . . . His temper gets more difficult daily, and she says that since he was here last he has spent

days and nights in tears, and her mother and she cannot make out why. He talks to himself at night, and called out the other day, " Poor Madame d'Epinay —if you only knew!" And they don't know what he means. He says that he is going to spend a whole fortnight here, and that he has a lot to tell me, and that he is always the better for my advice. But what seems incredible to me is that Mlle Le Vasseur assures me that Countess d'Houdetot goes to see the hermit pretty well every day, and they have told the women not to tell me. She leaves her servants in the forest, and comes alone, and returns alone. Little Le Vasseur is jealous, but I think she is telling lies, or else they have all taken leave of their senses. . . .

Oh, my friend, you have made me very hard to please! I feel it daily. I used to like seeing M. de Margency when I only saw him on and off in Paris—but to have him from morning till night *tête-à-tête*—I think you are the only person in the world who could possibly stand it! My companion is so lazy that it makes one dead tired to look at him: and he never wants the same thing for a quarter of an hour at a time. Supposing one wants to talk, he's either not got an idea in his head, or else such a swarm of utterly fiddling little thoughts that they get lost in the air before they reach your ear. He sticks like grim death to his latest notion, and then, to one's surprise, ten minutes later, has dropped it all of his own accord. He begins thirty different things at once, and does not follow a single one up: he is always enchanted with what he is going to do, and bored with what he is doing. The most sublime piece of writing will leave him perfectly cold, if it should, unfortunately, contain a single phrase to grate upon his ear. I am sure he would never pardon the prettiest woman for having her hair awry. Then he hates the slightest hint of provincialism. He is not without penetration

and shrewdness, but I have never seen him take in a single deep thought, or one that was out of the common. Ouf! I simply had to tell you all this. I like him very much, but I would rather be by myself, or with someone whose funny ways could blend with and fit in with my own—which are many. Really but for this reflection I should perhaps, by now, have taken a dislike to him.

The letter ended with:

My friend, not to-day, for the first time, have I felt that I can just leave myself in your hands. You inspire me daily with just that feeling of security that a child feels when it goes to sleep on its mother's knee.

Letter from M. Grimm to Madame d'Epinay

. . . Your letters are my one comfort. I am so glad that you are enjoying the beauties of Nature. Oh, you were born under a lucky star! For pity's sake do not miss your vocation: it rests with yourself to be the happiest and most adorable creature on the face of the earth, if you will but refrain from bowing to the opinions of others and will learn to suffice for yourself. . . .

We lead a pretty strenuous and very magnificent life. We have left our heavier equipment at ——, but, all the same, on every march it takes three hours to get the possession of indispensable requirements in and out of camp. It is scandalous, and makes me more than ever convinced that the world is made up of abuses and it would take a fool to try and set things right.[1]

[1] The luxury in the French army was disgraceful. When Frederick II beat Maréchal de Soubise at Rossbach (5th Nov., 1751) he captured (besides cannon) his actors, cooks, wig-makers, parrots, and casks of lavender water.

CHAPTER XIII

1757

Letter from M. Grimm to Madame d'Epinay *Munster*

You are a dear to go on keeping well, but I think you are hurrying matters by taking milk at night. Don't rush things, I do beg you. It is one of your old failings always to be in too great a hurry. My dear friend, Nature works slowly and imperceptibly: she has given you a pair of fine eyes: do use them, and do please follow her example.

What you tell me of Rousseau seems to me very extraordinary, and these mysterious visits of the Countess are still more so. He, poor devil, makes himself miserable, and dares not avow the real cause of his misery which lies in his own confounded mind and his pride: instead of that, he creates imaginary grievances that he may have the pleasure of grumbling at all mankind. . . .

I was interrupted yesterday by the arrival of the Marquis de Saint-Lambert. I spent the evening with him. . . . It is a great comfort to me to think that I shall have him for the rest of the campaign. He spoke of Rousseau's hostility towards me and he thinks that you have turned his head for some time past, and that is why I am obnoxious to him. Is that so?

But why was the Countess so cheerful? Has not Saint-Lambert's departure distressed her at all?

Letter from Madame d'Epinay to M. Grimm

Since you always liked me, my friend, to tell you of all our little daily doings, you must know that every

morning we gather as usual in the little room downstairs. There we have *déjeuner*, my mother, the children, Linant and I. Afterwards, Linant and my son retire, either for a walk or for lessons. If, however, there is any conversation worth listening to or that they can join in, they stay. The lazy Margency sometimes comes down, with whoever he happens to have tacked on to him, but all are free to join us or not, except the children, from whom I insist upon this mark of deference to my mother, and to whom I like to set an example. At ten o'clock we all retire to employ our time as we like. I get through my household duties as quickly as possible, then make my toilette, which is soon done. I write to you—work—and do not go to the dining-room till dinner-time. Then we have a good hour's play with the children: they retire about five o'clock, and then we endlessly discuss all they have said and done, and what they will say and do, and think, and Margency makes fun of us. The other day he composed a rhyming version of my mother's and my conversation—it was delightful nonsense. Sometimes, and very often, we talk of you, and then we are all on common ground. What else can I tell you? We go for walks, we read, we sleep, and altogether our life is pretty monotonous, but very nice and peaceful, and when one comes to look into it, it seems to be exactly the happy sort of life that so many people seek in vain. . . .

Letter from Madame d'Epinay to M. Grimm

I did not reply to your remark about the Marquis de Saint-Lambert saying that Rousseau is in love with me. I assure you that no such idea ever entered his head. Whatever made the Marquis think such a thing? I have thought it over well, and am quite sure that there is nothing in it.

Excuse me, the Countess is really terribly distressed over the Marquis' absence, but did grief ever damp her high spirits? She weeps in all sincerity, and laughs the same way. She was born lucky, if ever a woman was. . . . They say that Rousseau and the Countess continue their mysterious meetings in the forest. Three days ago he sent me word by the gardener that he was not coming to see me because he was unwell. That same evening I sent to the Countess' house: there he was *tête-à-tête*, and there he stopped two days. It seems to me so queer and absurd that I feel as if I'm dreaming. He came yesterday, and spent the day. I thought he seemed uncomfortable, but I appeared not to know or notice anything. . . .

Rousseau, however, spent a few days with her, during which visit she was struck with his duplicity or insincerity. She cites the following conversation:

I was talking to him (Rousseau) and to M. de Margency about Linant's method with my son, and we were partly approving, partly disapproving of his system. All at once it occurred to me to say: "It is very difficult to bring up a child." "I think so too, Madame," said Rousseau, "the reason being that fathers and mothers are not cut out by Nature to bring up children, nor are children cut out to be brought up." This remark, coming from him, petrified me. "What do you mean?" I asked. Margency burst out laughing and said what I had not ventured to say, "But haven't you some scheme of education in your head?" "Certainly I have," replied Rousseau just as coolly, "but it would be far better were it not required and I not called upon to provide it. In a state of Nature man has nothing to provide for except his own needs, and that under pain of death by starvation, nothing to guard against except his own enemies, and that in order to avoid being killed himself: nothing to produce except a fellow-creature—and that a pleasurable

function for which no parental instruction is required: so you see savage man's upbringing takes care of itself, whereas the basis of our education is an unnatural one. It has to be based on social conventions most of which are peculiar, contradictory, and sometimes incompatible with the tastes and temperament of the child, and sometimes with the interests, prospects and position of the father, and what not."

"But, still, we are not savages," I said, "and be it well or badly, children have to be trained: how is it to be done?"

"It is very difficult," he replied.

"I know that," said I, "it is what I said to you to begin with, and here I am, no forwarder."

"To facilitate your task," replied Rousseau, "you would have to start by entirely remodelling society, for unless you did so, you would be always finding yourself, while wanting your child to get on, holding up to him in his youth a whole lot of excellent maxims which will retard rather than assist his advancement. Frankly, look at all those who have got on well in the world: do you suppose that they owe their success to adherence to maxims of scrupulous honesty laid down by their parents? One dares not tell them to be deceitful and suspicious, but one knows very well that they have got to be so: that's the awkward part of education. One knows from experience the advantage of these qualities. Then, hark to the child more wideawake than his companions: supposing he were to press his father concerning the observance of rules prescribed for himself, when some special opportunity presented itself for carrying them out, say, when the father had a chance of sacrificing his fortune for a friend, or of assisting the poor—you would find the parent qualifying his precepts with so many 'ifs' and 'buts' that the child would no longer know what to think, and the fine maxim would all crumble to pieces. Mind—you must

not expect to do any good by education unless individual welfare is so bound up with general welfare that it is practically impossible for vice to go unpunished, and virtue unrewarded, which state of things, unfortunately, is not to be found anywhere at all."

"What! not even in your country?" said Margency.

"Not so bad there as in other places, perhaps," replied Rousseau, "but speaking generally whenever the national system of education is bad, there will be no good individual education, and youth is spent in learning what will have to be forgotten in after years. The great art of your educational system consists of applying or of forgetting maxims to suit the circumstances."

"But," said I, "do you not think that it is better to be good even in a corrupt society."

"Yes," said he, "but one only arrives at that conclusion at the end of one's days."

"Ah, Monsieur," I said, really angry, "you forget that I am a mother, you drive me desperate with your philosophy."

"Madame," he replied as imperturbably as ever, "you asked me for the truth, your very distress is proof that I have spoken it."

Letter from M. Grimm to Madame d'Epinay

. . . We saw the sun to-day for the first time but were reassured as to this phenomenon, and were promised rain by to-morrow. I have lost my sole remaining comfort, the company of the Marquis de Saint-Lambert. . . . I think with you that Rousseau is going mad, but why, my loving friend, that should surprise you I do not know. I have always warned you of it, and shall never cease telling you that you acted very wrongly in having, so to speak, encouraged him when he first behaved improperly

through your weakness in dealing with him. Having so much influence with him you should have recalled his mind to reason when it strayed. I pray you may not be involved in any of his nonsense. . . . Picture me, writing to you, leaning up against a wretched plank, while all around me the villagers clamour for redress because of the marauding and pillaging committed by our soldiers. You will hardly credit this—but they have taken 300,000 crowns' worth of linen. Severity does not restore discipline. We are surrounded by hanged men, and the massacre of women and children, who object to having their homes sacked, goes on just the same. . . .

Letter from Madame d'Epinay to M. Grimm

Yesterday we—my companion (Margency), the Marquis de Croismare and myself, all dined at the Hermitage. We left at half-past seven in the morning, after the gentlemen had had their chocolate, and I my milk. Rousseau was in the best of humours. My mother and the children came to meet us in the evening. Rousseau returned with us.

The good Le Vasseurs are devoted to you and weep with love and gratitude when they speak of you. The old lady whispered me, as if she was afraid of Rousseau hearing, " Madame, might I ask you news of someone? Ah, Madame, we are so indebted to him, as well as to you. Ah, if Madame but knew! No one gives us a thing, and we owe a louis! "

As you can imagine, I did not need telling twice, but I was obliged to put a stop to their confidences which were really quite scandalous. They had found a letter! I do not know exactly what it was about, not having allowed them to enter into details. I said to Thérèse, " My child, you should either throw any letter you find into the fire, without reading it, or else give it to the owner."

The same evening before going to bed

. . . Just as I was writing to you, the Marquis de Saint-Lambert came in. I am still full of it—if you only knew how we welcomed him, how we talked of you, how glad we were to see him! He gave me your letter: what a dear letter, and how much good it did me! But, my friend, the Marquis said you were sad. I don't like that. Remember—that endangers my peace of mind. I am not nearly as glad to see Saint-Lambert as sorry that you have lost him. He has seen you, he has helped you bear the tedium. He said you loved to talk to him of us. Forgive me for having been for one moment overjoyed to see him again.

Countess d'Houdetot came an hour after the Marquis' arrival to find him here. Some people have all the luck! I suppose she does appreciate him, but they both seemed rather chilly. I see someone else though, who is obviously in bitter distress . . . the effect of the apparition of the Marquis upon Rousseau left me practically certain that he is in love with the Countess. . . .

Letter from M. Grimm to Madame d'Epinay

. . . Well, well! so that bonny, that excellent head of yours is now all in a whirl and a fuss over Rousseau's philosophy! My friend, what he said had only to do with maxims told to children, and he is quite right.

But let your deeds and conversation speak for themselves: let your children see you assisting the poor with that delicacy and sympathy which is all your own —let them see your tolerance towards others—your love of truth, in a word, let them see how happy you are in beholding what is good and doing what is good, and they will desire the same happiness for themselves. Thus they will do what is right—either deliberately or even instinctively, as if it came naturally to them

to do so, and if they do not then it will simply mean that they had not got it in them, and that by no manner of means could anything have been made of them.

One thing, my loving friend, that makes you the dearer in my eyes, is the strict watch you keep over yourself, especially before the children. It is necessary, sometimes, to denounce before them the very thing that makes the joy of living, for the simple reason that society and its stupid regulations have corrupted everything. One cannot alter things, so one has to submit. Children have very sharp eyes! They may seem to be playing, but they have heard and seen! Oh, how many a time has this fear spoiled the dear moments spent with you! If we only knew, for certain, that some day they would be like us, and would be trying to make up for an unavoidable lapse, by a thousand kind and good deeds, which they consider the more obligatory because of that lapse, we might find this constraint of ours less galling. But who can tell? My friend, this brings it home to one that by no means is it permitted to everyone to infringe certain rules of society with impunity. Many a solid virtue is required to counterbalance the right to treat what may be called the " pedantry " of morality with contempt. Do good as you are wont to do, and talk no more to me of your confounded sophist who only sees things out of one eye. . . .

Letter from Madame d'Epinay to M. Grimm

I told you two days ago that the Baron was coming to La Chevrette. Nothing of the kind. Diderot has upset and put a stop to that plan, by telling the Baron straight out that he would never be seen in a place where he could not avoid meeting and getting acquainted with a woman of so infernal a character. Margency . . . told him, so he tells me, that I was in no greater

hurry to see him than he was to see me. He replied, " My friend, if she has made you think so, it's another proof of her duplicity."

Letter from Madame d'Epinay to M. Grimm

I must give you yet another bit of local gossip, the place abounds in yarns this year. Well, you must know then that little Verdelin, in a romantic outburst, confided in her old " one-eye " and tried to make out that he was only too glad that she had the " Syndic "[1] for a lover. This excessive candour had no such success with her husband as it had in whatever novel the little woman had got the idea from. Since then Margency has visited her much less frequently for he is afraid to go to his fair one's house. He takes it very philosophically, and when he does not get on my nerves he amuses me and makes me laugh.

Certainly did I choose, I could be well posted in Rousseau's love-affairs, or in Thérèse's gossip. She even came several times to grumble to me but I always stopped her. Getting nothing out of me she talked to M. de Margency, who laughs and gets on with all and sundry. Although apparently he does not believe what the creature says any more than I do, he repeats it all the same, and it amuses him. I have had to remind him more than once that, whether true or not, I do not like these tales, and that my friends must show some regard for my sister-in-law's feelings, the more so if she does not deserve to be picked to pieces. Besides, on what grounds ? Simply on the word of a jealous, stupid, gossipy, lying girl who brings a charge against a woman who is, as we all know, giddy, trusting, undoubtedly heedless, but at the same time candid and straight, very straight, sincere and good-hearted in the highest degree. I would a thousand times rather believe that Rousseau's head had turned, all of

[1] Gauffecourt nicknamed Margency " le Syndic des galantins."

its own accord, without outside assistance, than imagine Madame d'Houdetot waking up one morning to find herself a flirt and a bad woman.

My opinion, then, is, from what I have heard, as I have told you, at different times, that being fully convinced as she was of our hermit's virtue, she only regarded him as a friend, a confidant, comforter and guide, and has erred merely through inadvertence. Their lonely walks had, assuredly, as far as the Countess was concerned, no other object than discussions on such abstract subjects as morality, virtue, love, friendship, and all that ensues therefrom. Whether the Hermit had a more physical end in view, I cannot say. But the Countess would never have noticed it, and had he given a hint of it, she would have been astounded, and I can picture her doing her utmost to recall him to a sense of self-respect. Perhaps from a feeling for Rousseau, she may not have told the Marquis of his folly. I would not say but that out of sheer kindness of heart and honorableness she may not have done one silly thing after another, and possibly she will end by being the victim of it, and seem guilty of what she has never committed. I know only too well how that can come about. Of the gossip about a letter from her, found by Thérèse, I know nothing. If true, one would have to know everything, and see the letter, and be acquainted with the circumstances before one could judge. One thing is certain that it is impossible to see Rousseau without pitying him, for he has the look of one in despair. . . .

Madame d'Epinay had told Grimm that " Rousseau is now in my eyes nothing but a moral dwarf on stilts " and this because he had told her that he was going to Paris to see Diderot in order to apologise for an irritable letter that he had written him, whereas she saw that he was inventing this visit as a " pretext for

avoiding the Marquis whose intimacy with the Countess causes him a grief that he cannot conceal." When, moreover, he asked her for the loan of a portfolio to carry his MS. in, she perceived that he was only going to see Diderot about his book. Thereupon she scolded him for being underhand. The next day he said to her, " You are a very curious woman, you must have bewitched me to make me stand all you said patiently. Whatever is your charm for saying the straightest and most wounding truths without making one dislike you ?"

" My friend," I replied, " it is simply because your errors are of the head and not of the heart."

" How the deuce do you know that ? " he replied with the utmost violence. " Know, Madame, once and for all, that I am vicious : I was born so, and—good Lord—what you would never think—oh, how difficult I find it to do right and how easy to do wrong. You laugh. To prove how true my words are, know that I cannot help hating those who are kind to me."

" My friend," said I, " I don't believe a word of it, you might as well tell me that you cannot help liking those who treat you badly."

He had to laugh at that, but I was touched by him when he begged me with child-like earnestness to make allowances for him and to pity him. . . .

To this M. Grimm replied : " . . . So Rousseau told you, did he, that he did not take his work to Paris ? He lied, for he went for no other purpose. I had a letter yesterday from Diderot, in which he describes your Hermit to the life. He did the two miles on foot, and planted himself at Diderot's without letting them know beforehand that he was coming—simply in order to get Diderot to help with the revision of his book. Considering on what terms they had been, you can imagine that it seemed a bit queer ! . . . Rousseau kept him hard at it, from ten o'clock on Saturday morning till eleven o'clock on Monday night,

barely giving him time for bite or sup. The revision ended, Diderot mentioned a scheme of his own, and asked Rousseau to help him with some passage not quite to his liking. 'It is too difficult,' replied the Hermit frigidly, 'It is late and I am not used to late hours. Good night, I shall be starting to-morrow morning at six o'clock. It is time for bed.' He rose, went to bed, leaving Diderot astounded at his behaviour.[1] And this is the man you think so impressed by your lectures. Add to this a curious remark made by Diderot's wife, which I beg you to profit by. She is but a simple body, but no fool for all that. Seeing her husband downcast, after Rousseau had left, she asked him why: he told her, and said, 'It is the lack of nice feeling about that man that hurts me: he makes me work like a slave, not that I should probably have given a thought to that, had he not refused so curtly to devote a quarter of an hour to me.'

"'That surprises you!' said his wife. 'Then you do not know him. He is eaten up with envy. It infuriates him when anything fine comes out from another pen than his. You will see, he will commit some great crime some day rather than let himself go unnoticed. Look here! I should not care to swear that he would not take the side of the Jesuits and undertake to make out a case for them.'

"Diderot's wife summed him up very well, though that is not what Rousseau will do. He will side against the Philosophers—he will turn religious, and write against his friends. . . ."

Letter from M. Grimm to Madame d'Epinay

(*On the reception of the MS. of her Memoirs*)

Oh, most adorable of all possible and impossible friends. What! regardless of your health, regardless

[1] Diderot's daughter in her preface to her father's memoirs mentions this incident.

of my injunctions, you have made a fair copy in your own handwriting of that vast MS? . . . I was very tired when it arrived, I glanced at it, could not put it down, and at two o'clock in the morning was still reading it. If you go on as you have begun, you will certainly produce an unique piece of work. But do not work at it except when you are in the mood, and above all, always forget that you are writing a book. It will be quite easy to link it all up properly afterwards, but writing, to sound real, must be quite spontaneous, and the happiest effort of imagination is not the same thing. When I have a little more time, and God knows when that will be, I will return your precious MS. with a few suggestions—mere nothings, only a word or two that I think would be better altered. It is really a masterpiece. If you will be guided by me, you will not show this work to a soul until it is completed, for, without your noticing it, you will be handicapped, if you do so, in the long run, and you will be less natural, through striving after elegance of style. Regard it as a work for yourself alone, and you will produce something worthy of a woman of genius. Moreover, now that Rousseau no longer sighs for you, my poor friend, I take it, that if you have shown him a portion of these memoirs, you and he will have fallen out. He has too fine a perception not to see what a vast difference there is between your principal character and his tiresome, pedantic heroine.

You take Rousseau's love affairs very tragically: a crazy passion never alarms me: if the devil hasn't a hand in it, common sense is bound to reassert itself. The whole thing is quite out of keeping with Madame d'Houdetot's candid, upright nature, and that, again, sets my mind at rest. When there is no hope, the head never gets entirely turned, and I would wager, as you do, that Rousseau had no hope. . . . I cannot get over Madame de Verdelin confiding in her "philo-

sophic eye ". Everyone (ourselves excepted, of course) seems to be taking leave of their senses. I see from what you say that I have little to gain from all this nonsense. The fickle Rousseau will return to his old love, and as usual will be unfair to me.

Delighted with Grimm's commendation of her MS., Madame d'Epinay wrote him: " . . . Since I received your letter I have not hesitated to tell myself that I am doing a good piece of work. Who knows? Sometimes it is just such praise that is needed to develop genius. One has a reputation to keep up, and one makes efforts that otherwise one would not make; at any rate nothing is so wilting as self-distrust. . . ." (And she went on with:) " Well, I was right in saying that Rousseau's love affair was mere gossip. There is not a word of truth in all that Thérèse said. How vexed I should have been with myself had I listened to it. The Marquis de Croismare . . . went for a walk alone with the Countess who regaled him, in veiled language, which yet was clearer than daylight, with the story of her passion for Saint-Lambert. . . . She confided how Rousseau nearly quarrelled with her when she told him, straight out, of her feeling for Saint-Lambert . . . and that he exhausted all his eloquence in trying to make her see the impropriety of this attachment which he called criminal. She was far from seeing it in that light, she glories in it and only thinks the more of herself for it. The Marquis gave a very funny account of this effusion. But, in any case, here we have, as far as I can see, the explanation of the frequent confabulations between Rousseau and the Countess. . . . Oh, how sorry I should have been had I judged them hastily."

CHAPTER XIV

1757

"For the reader's benefit," says M. de Lisieux, "it must be stated that Rousseau's passion for Countess d'Houdetot was a very real one." M. de Lisieux goes on to say that Rousseau, knowing that the Countess was deeply in love with the Marquis de Saint-Lambert, thought his best course would be to run down the Marquis. But the impeccable Marquis was unassailable. Next, Rousseau disguised his passion from her, and devoted all his eloquence to trying to make her conscience uneasy as regards her liaison with Saint-Lambert. This attempt also failed. He then tried to make out that Madame d'Epinay was in love with the Marquis, and was trying to steal him from her sister-in-law. He made the Countess jealous, estranged her from her sister-in-law, and hoped that the Marquis, exasperated by her groundless jealousy, would break with her.

At this juncture the Marquis received a letter informing him that Rousseau and the Countess were living together, of which epistle M. de Lisieux suspected Thérèse to be the authoress.

M. de Saint-Lambert promptly had it out with the Countess, and was satisfied that what he had been told was a lie.

As the Countess was as yet unaware of Rousseau's real feelings towards her, she confided the contents of this letter to him and he thereupon went off into such a fit of rage and mortification that he became quite ill. He did not hesitate to accuse Madame d'Epinay of

having written the letter, "A treachery not at all improbable," said he, "seeing her passion for Saint-Lambert whom, by this means, she hoped to estrange from the Countess." But Madame d'Epinay, being, as her last letter shows, ignorant of what was in his mind, was at a loss to comprehend certain letters written to her by Rousseau.

Letter from Madame d'Epinay to M. Grimm

I really do believe that poor Rousseau is going mad. I wanted to wait before telling you what has occurred until I could get at the bottom of the business, but after talking things over, I am still in the dark. All that I can make out is that his brain is in a ferment, that he is unhappy, that he does not know on whom to lay the blame, and that having no real cause of complaint, he even accuses his friends, and sees nothing but troubles, dangers, plots on all sides, as Don Quixote saw wizards.

Being anxious about him, I wrote him, as I told you, and this is what I said:

"I am worried about you, my bear: you promised me, five days ago, that I should see you on the morrow. You never came, and you never sent me word. You do not usually break your word to me. You surely have not business worries: if you are in trouble, it would be an insult to my friendship to keep it from me. Then are you ill? Do, my dear friend, relieve my anxiety, which is as great as the affection you know I bear you."

The following day Thérèse came with this reply:

"I can tell you nothing yet. I am waiting for further particulars, which I shall obtain sooner or later. Meanwhile rest assured that outraged innocence will find a sufficiently warm defender to give the calumniators, whoever they are, cause to repent."

I was so astonished at this letter and it seemed so unintelligible that I questioned Thérèse as to Rousseau's condition and whether he was all right in his head. She said he was in a terrible state of agitation. When he got my letter, he shouted out, "Is it not adding insult to injury to suggest that I should go to her for consolation? She mocks me: but patience!"

That was all Thérèse knew. I wrote these few words in reply to Rousseau:

"I want to know how you are: your note tells me nothing. It is a riddle that I do not understand in the least. From trust and friendship I expect language both plainer and more appropriate to my feeling for you. You know that you can command me: one word and I am at your service."

This is the impertinent reply that I received in answer to my second note:

"I can neither go to see you nor receive a visit from you while I am in my present state of uneasiness. The trust you speak of is dead, and will not be easily revived. All I now see in your assiduity is a desire to extract statements which you can turn to your own advantage, but my heart, so quick to respond to the heart that invites it, is closed to cunning and artfulness. I recognise your usual wiliness in your difficulty in making out my note. Do you think I am so gullible as to imagine that you did not understand it? No, but I can combat and subdue your wiles by dint of candour. I am going to be more explicit—and then you will be more puzzled than ever.[1]

"Two lovers, most united, and worthy of each other's love, are dear friends of mine. I expect you will not know of whom I speak unless I mention them by name. I presume that an attempt has been made to estrange them and that I have been selected as the chosen means of making one of them jealous. It was

[1] According to Brunet's edition.
According to Boiteau: "in order to make my meaning clearer to you."

not a very fortunate choice but it suited a certain malevolent person, which person I suspect to be yourself. I hope that the matter is now clearer. So the suggestion is that the one woman in the world for whom I had the greatest regard and respect was infamous enough to give her heart and body to two lovers at the same time, and that I was fully aware of it? Also that I, whose heart lacks neither delicacy nor pride, was content to be one of the dastardly pair? If I knew that for a single moment you could have had so low an opinion of me, I should hold you in deadly hatred: but it is only with having said it and not with having thought it that I tax you. I do not know which of the three, supposing this was the case, you wanted to injure: but as you value peace, fear lest you have been unlucky enough to have succeeded. I have not hidden, from her or from you, my opinion of certain liaisons, but I would they could all end as honourably as her's, and that illegitimate love be changed into eternal friendship. Should I, who have done harm to no one, be the innocent instrument of bringing sorrow upon my friends? No, I should never forgive you. I should be your irreconcilable enemy. Your secrets are the one thing I should respect, for I will never be dishonourable.

"I do not suppose that my perplexity of many days past can last much longer: I shall probably know soon whether I have been mistaken. Then, maybe, I shall have a big wrong that I have committed to put right, and never shall I have done anything with better heart. But do you know how I intend to make amends for my faults during the short time that remains of my stay near you? I shall do what no other body will do when I have gone—and that is, tell you straight what is the world's opinion of you, and show you the stains on your good name that you have to expunge. Despite your circle of so-called friends, you can say

good-bye to Truth when you bid farewell to me, for you will find no one else to tell it you."

This was my reply:

"No doubt you have incontestable proof of what you have dared write me, for a mere suspicion is insufficient ground for a charge against a friend of ten years' standing. You make me sorry for you, Rousseau. If I did not think you mad, or on the verge of insanity, I swear I would not trouble to reply to you, and I would never see you again as long as I lived.

"You see that your letter cannot offend me: the cap does not fit: it simply comes nowhere near me. You know perfectly well that you do not really believe a word of all this infamous stuff. All the same I am glad to tell you that this nonsense will do you no good with me. If you feel inclined to change your tone and apologise for insulting me, you can come and see me, but only on that condition will I receive you. Do not talk to me of my supposed reputation. Instead of giving me what you call a token of affection in that form, show me the respect and regard you owe me by confining your conversation to what is suitable for me to listen to. Moreover, understand that little do I care for what people say of me, I do what is right and that is enough for me. As for my secrets, I release you from your pledge, though it's little you trouble to keep it. You know better than anyone that I have no secrets, except such as it were to my honour to divulge."

The next thing that Madame d'Epinay records is that Rousseau turned up at La Chevrette to make his submission to his lady, proffering the rather strange excuse that he had been led to believe that she was hopelessly in love with Saint-Lambert. She told him of course that he had no business to believe such a

thing, nor to imagine that she could have stooped to an infamous deed through disappointment in love, and Rousseau was lectured and more or less pardoned.

Letter from M. Grimm to Madame d'Epinay

22nd July

. . . I am very sorry that you wrote as you did to Rousseau: don't you see that there was no need to say more than that, not having heard from him, you feared he might not be well and that you were sending to ask how he was and when he was coming to see you. There would have been no harm in a letter like that. But why ask if he was in trouble? You had no reason for thinking he was, and the question was bound to look odd or suspicious. I can't make his reply out a bit, but I'd swear there's more in it than meets the eye. He could not have written to you as he did, had you confined yourself to this simple note, whereas now I dread what he will say next. I beg you, do take the proper attitude in this business. You know madmen are dangerous, especially when one panders to them as you have sometimes done to this poor devil through your ill-judged pity for his folly—one always gets a bit involved oneself. If your note had been simpler he would not have been able to say that your talk of comforting him was mere mockery. . . .

Letter from Madame d'Epinay to M. Grimm

After telling him that the Marquis de Saint-Lambert had departed without saying good-bye to her, and that Thérèse had told M. de Margency that the Countess had forbidden Rousseau to visit her, Madame d'Epinay continued:

It seems a long time since I told you anything

about the children. I must tell you what Pauline did and said the other day. She was giving herself her usual airs and her governess and I pointed out to her, quite kindly, that she was making herself perfectly ridiculous, but she must go her own way if she did not choose to pay attention to us. A day or two later, heedless of our advice, she was going on in just the same way, in spite of a warning look from me. The Marquis de Croismare burst out laughing and told her that she seemed to take him for a doll with whom she could play " Madame ", and proceeded to say that she was too big to be so babyish, and in fact he chaffed her for an hour. She got cross and he laughed the more. Then, as if a thought had struck him, he said, " Come, Mademoiselle, perhaps I am mistaken, you state your opinions so flatly, that I begin to think that you know more than I thought: let us settle the matter once and for all." The subject in question was the King of Prussia's letter, which everyone is talking about, and which Pauline had opined was all wrong, because she did not understand it. The Marquis put a number of questions to her which she was unable to answer because she had not the necessary knowledge to enable her to understand the letter. After that, it was easy to show her how silly she had been. She came out of it very well. She was at first very ashamed, then, with tears in her eyes, she said to the Marquis: " Monsieur, I thank you for the lesson: it was a little severe, but I shall remember it: let's play at shuttlecock! "

Isn't that child adorable? My friend, I mean to make an angel of her. . . . The Countess spent a minute or two here, yesterday evening, for the first time for ages. Her eyes were swollen as big as fists, and she had a bad headache, and she never stopped bemoaning the unfairness of men and the nuisance that gloomy people were.

Rousseau was ill and Madame d'Epinay sent to inquire after him. He replied:

I thank you for your thought of me. I never was so ill as I have been the last few days. I can't stand anyone—myself included. I suffer every possible bodily pang, and, in my soul, the agonies of death. Yesterday I went to Eaubonne, hoping that the walk and Madame d'Houdetot's gaiety would have a soothing effect upon me. I found her ill, and I returned worse than when I set out. It is absolutely essential for me to abstain from all society, and live in solitude, until this state of things ends one way or another. Rest assured that on the first day of respite, I shall not fail to come and see you. . . . I beg you will all pardon my surliness, and believe me when I say that were any of you in my place, you would be in your beds and would never expect to get up again.

On the 2nd August Madame d'Epinay wrote M. Grimm that she and the Marquis de Croismare had waited in the road for the post, both of them nervously anxious for news from the War. The poor Marquis had heard that his son was killed. On the 3rd August she speaks of a terrible nine days without news. On the 4th she says the Marquis had now heard that his brother and son were safe, but, said she, it would take him a long time to get over the strain of his anxiety. "He thought" (she said) "that there would have been a riot at the post yesterday, for there were over four thousand souls trying to force the gates and seize the letters." At ten o'clock on the evening of the 4th she received four letters all at once, of which one gave news of victory and was as follows:

"The glory of the battle of Hastenbeck, Madame, belongs to your friend M. de Chevert. His generalship was splendid: he and his detachment ought to have been wiped out a thousand times. The credit is

all his, as the rest of the army took no part in the engagement. His officers are in raptures about him, and the fact that we did not follow up his victory is no fault of his. Hameln surrendered yesterday morning. . . . Thirty hours after the action an officer found a wounded soldier on the battlefield. 'General,' said he, "can you not have me removed? I am not complaining, but I have had enough.' As he spoke he bared his breast and displayed five gunshot wounds. This bravery is characteristic of our men, and we constantly hear of similar instances."

Letter from M. Grimm to Madame d'Epinay

. . . I have so much to tell you that I do not know where to begin. However, we will deal with Rousseau first. I am grieved with what you tell me about him. That man will end by going mad. We realised that possibility long ago, but what we have to consider now is that his stay at the Hermitage will have been the cause of it. No brain as excitable and ill-regulated as his can stand solitude. The harm is done: you would do it, my poor friend, although I always told you that you would regret it. I know what to do with him—myself. He is not worth bothering about, since he knows nothing of the dues nor joys of friendship, but I want to safeguard you against any possible dangers, and that I do not find so easy. This business is certain to end in the deuce of some unforeseen upset, and I think matters are bad enough already in that you have laid yourself open to receiving insulting letters. One can forgive a friend anything, except insult, for insult can only be the outcome of contempt. No matter in what state of mind my friend was, I would never forgive him for having harboured such a feeling towards me. I think your reply was weak: when one is insulted one should show resentment.

You ought simply to have bidden Rousseau come, and said no more than that: you should have heard what he had to say, should have made him understand how unworthy his behaviour had been, and you should have shown him the door, and bade him never enter it again. Then you would have had him on his knees, and could have pardoned him—but no, you still treated him as a friend! However, if, since your last piece of news, you have been treating him with your usual friendliness, you will have made a very great mistake, of which you will repent, because it will be followed by still greater impertinence. Greater—no, that could not be! But if you are incapable of resenting such conduct, you are lacking in self-respect. My only comfort in all this business will be to hear that you have given Rousseau the cold shoulder, that he bewails the fact with due contrition, and that you have told him once and for all, with proper emphasis, that the estrangement is all his own fault, and that you cannot take him back into favour until he has made amends—and that's not to be done in a day. This is the way to treat people if you want to keep your friends. You are not quick enough to feel insult. I have told you so often. One should resent insults, but never pay them back. That's my principle!

10 *o'clock the same evening*

Since writing this letter I find that I shall almost certainly be back with you at the end of this month or the beginning of next. . . .

Letter from Madame d'Epinay to M. Grimm

. . . This time it seems as though Rousseau had broken for good with the Countess. He wrote her letter after letter, and she at first would not reply at all. Finally she wrote him some few lines, telling him

that she would neither write to him nor let him visit her any more in future. The day after he received her ultimatum he became feverish and delirious. Thérèse, very scared, informed me, and I sent him the little doctor who was here, who assures me that his condition is not dangerous, at least he hoped not. . . . He sent for M. Diderot, who at once came to see him at the Hermitage. I do not know what passed between them but I presume that you can easily find out from M. Diderot. . . . He has been very bad. I did all I could for him but did not go to see him. Three days ago he crawled here. On the second night of his stay here he seemed as if he was going to die. I sent for his housekeepers . . . to-day he is a little better. . . .

Yesterday afternoon, when we were alone together, he told me, sobbing, that if I were hard on him he would give way to despair, and should take his life. I spoke on impulse and replied, " The best thing you could do, if you have not strength of mind to be virtuous." He was dumbfounded and I too. It was a cruel thing to say, but it was said, and could not be unsaid. I toned it down as best I could by saying that I attributed all his errors to his unbalanced mind, and by standing up for his heart. I pretended to think that he could be candid and truthful once more, and I restored him the courage that he appeared to have lost. I consoled him. If I did wrong, I confess it, but it is not in me to look on, unmoved, at anyone in distress, and leave him uncomforted.

The next day

I had a charming letter from the Marquis de Saint-Lambert. He mentioned the Countess, and is apparently none too pleased with her. " Blame Madame d'Houdetot for my seeing so little of you during my visit," he said. " If you see her, tell her

that I am, as ever, very attached to her. Indeed, I do tell her so myself, but she prefers to be told it by others."

I think he has dealt very decently with the Hermit, and has treated him very well, though Rousseau detected a note of raillery and scorn that he had not noticed in him before. As for the Countess, she writes me letter upon letter! Three yesterday, imploring me to write to the Marquis and see if I can make him believe that she adores him. She tells me heaps of little things that show me very plainly that he would be glad to be rid of her. I made a befitting reply, and am not going to have any finger in that pie.

M. Grimm now returned and Madame d'Epinay resumed her Diary once more.

The Diary

September, 1757

The state of my health alarms me, and for a week has prevented me from enjoying the best of blessings, which is, having M. Grimm in our midst once more. He arrived in the best of health. We all went to meet him. My mother was up first that day, but by a singular piece of ill-luck, I do not think I ever felt more unwell. I started the day by having violent palpitations, and it was only my longing to see M. Grimm again that enabled me to drag myself along.

He was shocked to see the change in me. . . .

Madame d'Epinay was very ill and she decided to yield to her mother's and Grimm's wishes and consult Dr. Tronchin. M. de Lisieux, who had been away from Paris, was shocked, on his return, to find his ward so changed and so thin. Outsiders who only saw her now and again, could not possibly judge of her condition, as from time to time she was said to be

very ill, and then a few days afterwards she would be seen, apparently in the best of health, and this explains a remark attributed to Duclos, made before a number of people. "I can solve the riddle, and I have it on good authority. She is going crazy. Grimm tyrannises over her. I warned her of it. She would not believe me, for she never had any sense and never will have."

Dr. Tronchin, being in Geneva, said he could not treat her from a distance, and she therefore would have to go to Geneva, which she did not wish to do, because she could not bear the thought of being separated from M. Grimm, whose business with the Prince would prevent his accompanying her. However, a week's illness decided her to go to the doctor in Switzerland. Monsieur de Lisieux records that she spent the days immediately preceding her departure in a state of the greatest agitation, torn between hope and fear, and a scene that she had with Rousseau almost rendered her unfit to travel, so terribly was she affected by that man's duplicity. During the last days she spent in the country Rousseau's affection for her seemed redoubled. On the evening of the day before she left Epinay, while they were alone together, her letters were brought to Madame d'Epinay, and among them was one for Rousseau, addressed to him at her house, and which she handed to him. The perusal of this letter caused him such extreme annoyance that, forgetting he was not by himself, he banged his head with his clenched fists and swore. "What is the matter?" said she, "whatever has upset you like this?" "Dash it!" said he, throwing down the letter which he had just torn with his teeth. "They're no friends, they're tyrants! The imperious tone this Diderot takes! I don't want their advice." Madame d'Epinay picked up the letter. "I hear," wrote Diderot, "that Madame d'Epinay is going to Geneva

but I do not hear that you are accompanying her. Do you not see that if she has behaved as badly to you as you suppose, you have now the one opportunity of paying back your debt to her, and then breaking decently with her. If you do not do this, and let her go in the state you see her to be in, she will, seeing how ill-disposed she is towards you, make a grievance against you out of it, and you'll never be rid of it. Besides are you not afraid that your conduct may be misconstrued, and that you will be thought ungrateful, or something or other? I know, of course, that your conscience is perfectly clear, but is that, in itself, enough, and can we afford to disregard the opinion of others?"

"What is this supposition of yours?" asked Madame d'Epinay, "and what reason has M. Diderot for thinking that I am ill-disposed towards you? What wrong have I done you, please?"

Rousseau recovered himself as if from a dream, and stood dumbfounded at the indiscretion that his anger had led him into. He snatched the letter from Madame d'Epinay's hand, and finally, pressed for a reply, said, "It's all because of my former doubts, but you told me there was nothing in them, and I've never given the matter a thought since, as you very well know. Would you really like it if I went to Geneva?"

"And you have actually spoken against me to M. Diderot?" said Madame d'Epinay.

"I admit I did," he said. "I ask your pardon. He came to see me when my heart was sore and I could not resist telling him my trouble. How can one be reserved with a person one is fond of?"

"You don't find it so difficult, Monsieur, to suspect a friend, and bring a groundless charge against her?"

"If I had been certain, Madame, that you were guilty, I should have carefully avoided saying so, I

should have felt too humiliated and unhappy about it."

"And was that your reason for not enlightening M. Diderot, since?"

"Of course—you had not done it—no occasion arose for telling him, and I thought no more about it."

Madame d'Epinay, indignantly, was going to order him out of the room. He fell at her feet, and begged her pardon, assuring her that he would write at once to M. Diderot and clear her.

"Just as you like," said she, "in future, your doings will be nothing to me. You are not content to wrong me most cruelly: you swear daily to me that life will not be long enough to make up for it: and at the same time you make me out to your friend as an abominable creature. You allow him to go on thinking of me in this way and you think that as long as you tell me to-day that you made a mistake, all is well."

"I know Diderot," he replied, "and the powerful effect of first impressions upon him. I was waiting for some proof of your innocence."

"Monsieur," she said, "go—your presence makes me sick. I am only too glad to be going away: I could not bring myself to see you again. You can tell all whom it may concern that I did not want to have you with me, as we are unsuitable travelling companions, seeing the state of health we are both in. Go—and do not let me see you again."

He went out furious. Madame d'Epinay sent for M. de Lisieux and M. Grimm, who were out walking together. They found her absolutely exhausted from the shock of that man's duplicity. She admitted that she had brought it on herself, through having overlooked his latest piece of madness too readily. M. Grimm said that he should see Diderot when he got to Paris. As for Rousseau he stayed in his own room, that evening, and did not reappear till next day just when

Madame d'Epinay was leaving. Then he went up to her and said, "I think, Madame, that I had better hand over to you this letter that I have written Diderot. I hope to prove to you presently that I am not as bad as I may seem. The letter contains all that it befits me to say. I ought to have written it before, it is true, and so I have told him. It remains for me to ask you to let me stay on at the Hermitage till your return or at any rate till the Spring."

"It is at your disposal, Monsieur," she replied, "just as long as you care to stay there."

She took the letter and entered the carriage.

The letter was sent to M. Diderot whom M. Grimm saw the next day. When he opened the subject Diderot began to laugh. "What's all this about clearing her character," said he. "Read this, and for once in your life, if possible, don't be gulled."

"Why ever," wrote Rousseau, "do you send your letters to me to Madame d'Epinay's address? I have told you twenty times that every one that comes to me, through her, is opened—and this one as well—which has caused a fearful row with her. It meant explaining this, that and tother, and having to put up with unjust reproaches. That woman is mad on standing well with you: she will never forgive me for telling you the truth. You needn't talk: she and I are quits, and I feel under no obligation to go with her. I can't possibly manage it and I can assure you that she does not even wish me to."

The effect of this letter upon M. Grimm may be imagined. It was useless for him to lay the true facts before Diderot, he could not shake his prejudice. But he bound him to silence, and they agreed to keep each other informed of all they found out, until the mystery of Rousseau's behaviour was solved.

Letter from Rousseau to Madame d'Epinay

I hear, Madame, that your departure has been delayed and that your son is ill.[1] I beg you will send me word as to how he is and how you are. I should be glad were your journey abandoned, but through your own restoration to health, and not through his being ill.

Madame d'Houdetot spoke to me on Tuesday of this journey and was almost as insistent as Diderot in urging me to accompany you. This anxiety to make me go, with no thought for my own state of health, makes me suspect a conspiracy of which you are the moving spirit. I have neither wit nor patience to verify facts and am not on the spot, but I am pretty acute, and I am very sure that the letter from Diderot was not really his idea. I do not deny that the wish to have me with you is kind, and a compliment to me, but, apart from the fact that you did not seem very keen about it, and that you had already made all your travelling arrangements, I cannot permit a lady who is a friend of mine to make use of someone else's influence to obtain what no one could better obtain than herself. I think that sort of thing savours of tyranny and intrigue which is displeasing to me, and perhaps I have displayed this feeling too openly, but only to our mutual friend. I have not forgotten my promise, but one is not master of one's thoughts, and all I can do is to state mine in this matter, that I may be put right, if I am wrong. I can assure you that had you, instead of acting in this manœuvring sort of way, pressed me in a friendly manner, had you told me you wished it very much, and that I would be a help to you, I should have waived all other considerations

[1] Linant and the boy were going with her to Geneva, and her departure was delayed for a day or two owing to the child's illness.

and gone with you. I don't know where all this will end, but come what may, be sure I shall never forget your kindness to me and that when you no longer want me for your slave, you will always have me for a friend.

CHAPTER XV

1757

Before Madame d'Epinay's departure, M. Grimm received the following letter from Rousseau. He sent it on to M. Diderot who then began to take a rather different view of Madame d'Epinay. M. de Lisieux asked Grimm to keep him informed of Rousseau's doings and M. Grimm therefore forwarded to him the letters he received from Rousseau. This particular letter they agreed not to show Madame d'Epinay.

Letter from Rousseau to M. Grimm

Monday, 29th October, 1757

Tell me, Grimm, why is it that all my friends make out that I ought to accompany Madame d'Epinay? Am I in the wrong, or are they all bewitched? Are they all toadies ever ready to side with the wealthy, and saddle the poor with a hundred and one useless duties that render his poverty more hopeless and more hard. I refer the matter to you and you alone. Although no doubt you are just as biased as the rest I take you to be fair enough to put yourself in my place and decide where my duty lies. Hear, then, my friend, what I have to say, and tell me what I ought to do, for, whatever your advice is, I declare I shall follow it on the instant.

On what grounds should I consider it my duty to accompany Madame d'Epinay? Friendship, gratitude, the help I could be to her? Let us look into these points.

Supposing Madame d'Epinay has shown me friend-

ship, I have shown her more: attentions have been mutual and at least as great on my side as on hers. Both of us being invalids, I am no more bound to wait on her than she is to wait on me, unless it is the duty of the greater invalid to look after the lesser. Because my ailments are incurable, is that any reason for making light of them? I will add just one word more: she has friends who are not so ill, not so poor, not so jealous of their liberty, less pressed for time, and of whom she is quite as fond as she is of me, and I cannot see why some of them should not consider it their duty to accompany her. Why this crazy idea of singling me out for the duty, seeing that I am the least fitted to undertake it? If I cared enough for Madame d'Epinay to be ready to sacrifice myself in order to cheer her up, how little must she care for me, if she were willing to purchase the attentions of so clumsy a courtier at the price of my health, my life, my inconvenience, and my repose, and every resource I possess. I do not know if I ought to have offered to go with her, but I do know that she could not have accepted my offer, unless she was as hard-hearted as wealthy people usually are, and I have always thought her far from being that.

As for kindnesses, first and foremost, I don't like them, I don't want them, and I don't feel grateful to those who force them upon me,and I said so plainly to Madame d'Epinay before ever I accepted any from her. It is not that I object, any more than anyone else does, to the dear shackles of friendship, but pull the chain too tight, and snap it goes, and I am off. What has Madame d'Epinay done for me? You know better than anyone, and I can speak freely to you on the subject. She had a little house built for me at the Hermitage, she got me to go and live there, and I have pleasure in adding that she did her utmost to make it a secure and pleasant habitation.

What did I, on my side, do for Madame d'Epinay, at the time when I was thinking of retiring to my own country, and was wanting to do so very much, and ought to have done so? She moved heaven and earth to keep me. By her pleadings, and manœuvrings even, she overcame a lengthy and proper resistance on my side: deaf to my own wishes, inclinations, and to the disapproval of my friends, my heart yielded to the voice of friendship, and I allowed myself to be dragged to the Hermitage. From that moment I always felt that I was in another person's house, and that moment's weakness has already caused me acute regret. My kind friends, intent on pestering me, never left me a minute in peace, and have often reduced me to tears to think that there was not five hundred miles between us. However, far from being able to give myself up to the charms of solitude, the one consolation of a poor, afflicted soul, whom everyone is bent on badgering, I saw that I was no longer my own master. Madame d'Epinay, being often alone by herself in the country, hoped that I would keep her company, which was her reason for getting me to stay there. After making one sacrifice to friendship, a second had to be made to gratitude. One needs be poor, without a valet, a hater of fuss and a person of my disposition, to understand what life in another person's house means to me. However, I have dwelt two years in hers, in continual subjection, though to the tune of the most wonderful discourses on liberty, waited on by twenty servants, polishing my own shoes every morning, blown out with violent indigestion, and sighing for my own meals all the time. You know also that I cannot work at fixed times, I must have solitude—the woods and contemplation—but I say nothing of lost time, I shall regard it as all to the good if I die of starvation a month or two sooner than I otherwise should. Still, take an hour of a man's life and time,

and consider what it represents in money, and then take Madame d'Epinay's kindnesses and set them as against the abandonment of my project of returning to my country and my two years of slavery, and then tell me which of us two, she or I, is the more indebted to the other.

Then we come to the question of my being of use to her. Madame d'Epinay is starting off in a nice post-chaise, accompanied by her husband, the tutor, her son, and five or six servants: she is going to a populous city where she will meet plenty of people, and her only trouble will be which friends to pick and choose out of the lot. She is going to M. Tronchin, her doctor, a clever man, very well thought of, and popular. She will be one of a distinguished family where she will get all that she can possibly require for the restoration of her health and in the way of friends and amusement. Then take my position, my ill-health, temperament, means, tastes, my own way of living, which will mean more to me in future than any human beings or Reason itself, and tell me, I beg you, what sort of help I could have been to Madame d'Epinay on this journey, and the discomfort I should have been put to in order to be of any use to her at all. Could I stand the post-chaise? Could I hope to travel such a distance, and at such speed, without accident? Should I have had to get them to stop continually for me to get out, or should I have had to hasten my agony and last hour by constraining myself? Let Diderot make light of my life and health—my state of health is well known and famous Paris surgeons can prove it, and be sure that seeing what I have to suffer, I am little less sorry than others are that I go on living so long. Madame d'Epinay would have the prospect of continual unpleasantness, a sorry spectacle, and possibly some misadventure on the journey. She knows quite well that, in such case, I would sooner go and die behind a bush,

than cause the slightest expense or detain a single servant, and I, on my side, know too well how kind-hearted she is, not to be aware how grieved she would be if she had to leave me behind in such a state. I could follow the carriage on foot as Diderot would have me do, but the mud, rain and snow would handicap me greatly at this season of the year. However good a runner I was, how could I make twenty-five leagues a day? And if I let the chaise go on without me, whatever use would I be to the person inside it? Arrived at Geneva, I should be spending my days closeted with Madame d'Epinay, but however keen I might be on amusing her, such an indoor life, so very distasteful to me, would be bound to ruin my health, and plunge me into uncontrollable depression. All said and done, an invalid is not the proper person to look after another invalid, and he who refuses to be looked after at all when he is ill, is exempt from looking after others when it means losing his own health thereby. When we are alone together and both of us fairly cheerful, Madame d'Epinay has no conversation, nor I either, so what would it be like, were I depressed and constrained? I fail to see that she would be likely to have a very lively time under these circumstances. If she gets a pleasant surprise at Geneva, I shall get a greater one, for with money one can rub along anywhere, but the poor are at home nowhere. My acquaintances there may not suit her, and those she will make will suit me still less. I shall have duties of my own that will keep me away from her, or if I neglect them, I shall be asked what urgent calls cause this neglect, and keep me forever in her house. If I were better dressed I might pass for her footman. Well, then, is a poor, afflicted wretch, with scarcely any shoes to his feet, who has no clothes, no money, no resources, and who only asks his dear friends to let him be poor but free, likely to be of much

use to Madame d'Epinay surrounded as she is with all the comforts of life, and with her retinue of ten persons? Oh, Wealth! vile, contemptible Wealth! if they who repose in thy bosom can do without the poor, I am more lucky than they who possess thee, for I can do without them!

Because she is fond of me, they say: because she needs her friend. Oh, I well know all the interpretations of the word friendship! A fine-sounding name that often spells "salary of the slave": but where slavery commences, friendship immediately ends. I shall always be glad to serve a friend provided he be a poor man like myself: if he be better off, then let us both be free or let him do me service, for his bread is already earned, and he has more time to devote to pleasure.

Just a word or two about myself. If duty does bid me go with Madame d'Epinay, are there not yet stronger ties that hold me back, and is Madame d'Epinay the one and only being on the face of the earth to whom I am indebted? You may be sure that no sooner had I started off than Diderot, who thinks it so wrong of me to stay behind, will think it still more wrong of me to go, and with better reason. "He accompanies," he will say, "a rich woman, who has plenty of people with her, who does not need him in the least, and to whom, after all, he is not so much indebted, and leaves here, in poverty and loneliness, those persons who have devoted their lives to his service, and to whom his departure spells despair." If I let Madame d'Epinay bear all my expenses, Diderot will make out that I am under a fresh obligation that will be a chain round my neck to the end of my days. If ever I dare do as I like for a moment, "Look at the ungrateful creature," it will be said, "she was so good as to take him to his own country, and now he leaves her alone." All I may do to repay my debt to her will only augment my indebtedness, for

there is nothing like wealth for dominating and calling bondage "benefits conferred". If I do what I ought to do, and pay part of my own expenses, where can I scrape together so much money and at such short notice? To whom can I sell the few belongings and the few books that I have left? There would be no more going about in an old dressing-gown all the winter for me. All my clothes are shabby: it would take time to get them done up, or else I must buy new ones, but people who have ten changes of clothes don't think of these things. During my absence, and how long it would be for I do not know, I should be leaving a household here that would have to be kept up. If I leave the women at the Hermitage, I should have, in addition to the gardener's wages, to pay a man to look after them, for it would be inhuman to leave them completely alone in the midst of the woods. If I take them to Paris, I must lodge them somewhere: and what will become of the furniture and papers left here? I shall require pocket money, for what does living free of cost in someone else's house, where all is well, provided the masters are waited on, amount to? It amounts to spending more than one would at home, for the privilege of being thwarted all day long, going without what you want, never doing a thing you like, and finally finding oneself under an obligation to those in whose house one has had a big hole bitten out of one's purse. In addition, there is the indolence of a lazy invalid accustomed to letting things slide, without any loss to herself, used to having all to her hand without ever having to make a request, and whose appointments, wealth, and silence are all conducive to one's being neglected. If the journey be long and my money runs out, my shoes get worn and my stockings in holes, if my linen needs washing, or I need a shave, or my wig wants attention, etc. etc., it would be wretched to be without a penny, and if it

meant asking Madame d'Epinay for whatever I required—well, that settles it, and she can just keep what she has got to herself, and I tell you straight that I would rather be a thief than a beggar.

I think I see the origin of all these wierd duties laid on me: they are due to the fact that all those of my circle invariably judge me according to their own position and never by mine, and would have a man who has not a penny live as though he had a regular income of six thousand livres and leisure to boot.

No one seems able to put himself in my place, and will not see that I am a creature apart, who has neither the character, principles, nor resources of other folk, and must not be judged by their standards. If anyone does observe my poverty, he does not respect that which is its compensation, namely, liberty, but he only makes its burden heavier. So it comes that Philosopher Diderot, sitting in his study, by a good fire, in his fur-lined dressing-gown, would have me do twenty-five leagues a day on foot in wintry weather all in the mire, following after a post-chaise, because, all said and done, to run and get muddy is the poor man's lot. But in truth, Madame d'Epinay, for all her wealth, does not deserve such an insult from J. J. Rousseau. Don't you imagine that Philosopher Diderot, for all his talk (supposing he could not stand riding in the chaise), would ever dream of running after anybody's chaise—though at any rate there would have been this difference in his case, in that he would have had good woollen stockings, stout shoes, and a good undervest, and he would have supped well on the evening before, and would have had a good warm before starting, so that he would have been in better condition for running than he who had not had the wherewithal to pay for supper, warmth, or fire. My word, if Philosophy is not capable of making these distinctions, I hardly see what use it is.

Ponder my arguments, my dear friend, and tell me what I ought to do. I want to do my duty, but seeing the condition I am in, what more can be demanded of me? If you think I ought to go, tell Madame d'Epinay so, and then send me word by messenger, and be sure that without hesitation I shall set off at once for Paris on receipt of your reply.

As for staying on at the Hermitage, I feel strongly that I must live there no longer, even though I continue to pay the gardener's wages, for that is not sufficient rent: but I think I owe it to Madame d'Epinay not to leave the Hermitage as if I were in any way dissatisfied, for that would look as if she and I had fallen out. I admit that it would also be difficult for me to make a move at this season of the year, from the foretaste of which I am already suffering severely. It would be better to wait till Spring, when my departure will look more natural, and when I am determined to look for some retreat unknown to those barbarous tyrants, called friends.

Reply from M. Grimm to M. Rousseau

Saturday, 3rd November

I have done my best to avoid making a definite reply to the horrible apology you addressed to me. You press me for a reply, which, simply in fairness to myself, and my friends whom you have so shamefully insulted, I give you.

I never thought that you should have gone to Geneva with Madame d'Epinay. Had your first impulse been to offer to do so, it would have been for her to check you by reminding you of what, in your position, you have to consider, your health for one thing, and the women you have brought to this isolated spot for another. That is all I think. You never felt any such impulse, and that comes as no shock to me. It is a

fact that when, on my return from the army, I heard that, in spite of all the objections that I had pointed out to you, you had been wanting to go to Geneva for some time past, I thought it not at all astonishing that my friends should express surprise at your still hanging on here when such a natural and honourable opportunity for departing presented itself. I did not then comprehend your monstrous system: it has made me shudder with indignation, it is such a tissue of odious principles, baseness and duplicity! You dare talk to me of your slavery—to me who for over two years have daily witnessed every manner of sign of the kindest and most generous friendship shown you by that woman! If I could bring myself to forgive you I should consider myself unworthy to possess a friend. I will never set eyes on you again as long as I live, I shall think myself lucky if I can expunge the memory of your doings from my mind. I beg you forget me and trouble me no more. If this very reasonable request does not move you, then remember that I hold your letter, which will justify my attitude in the eyes of every decent person.

Reply from Rousseau to M. Grimm

I would not lend an ear to my very right suspicions: too late I have discovered what you are. So this is the letter you have taken time to think out. I return it to you, it is not for me. You can show mine to all the world and hate me openly. It will be one piece of deceit less on your side.

Letter from M. Grimm to Madame d'Epinay

. . . I must tell you that a few days before you left I had a letter from Rousseau, explaining why he did not go with you. It is the last word in madness and

badness which was my reason for not reading it to you at the moment of parting. I gave him the reply he deserved, the sort you should always have given him. He returned my letter so that now there is an open and very definite breach between us. I seized this opportunity of showing him up to Diderot, and I also sent Diderot the letter he wrote you the day you left. These two epistles have, at any rate, served to partly justify you, and Rousseau, himself, without meaning to, has done the rest. It looks as though he means to leave the Hermitage, so he is probably preparing a fine manifesto for you in his own defence. I advise you to have no dealings with him and not to answer him. . . . Not only is the man bad but most decidedly he is cracked. I do not know if you remember hearing, in the autumn, that Diderot had advised him to write to M. de Saint-Lambert. Now this is why he did so. Rousseau had asked Diderot to come to the Hermitage. The latter went there and found him in a deplorable state, and Rousseau confided to him the fact that he was madly in love with Countess d'Houdetot, but as his principles forbade him to yield to his feelings, even if she would have listened to him, he was sufficiently sure of himself to feel his love was in no way dishonourable. " My trouble," said he to Diderot, " the thing that wrings my heart, is that the Marquis de Saint-Lambert is highly suspicious of my love, and is jealous of me—of me, his friend (whatever is his idea of a friend ?) and that he nags the Countess about me, even suggesting that she returns my love, whereas I have never allowed myself to let her know it, and she is ignorant of it and always will be. It is Madame d'Epinay," he added, " who has sown discord between us through her endless flirtatiousness and intriguing."

" I see only one proper course to take," replied Diderot, " and that is to write to the Marquis and

make a clean breaſt to him of your love, and tell him that the Countess knows nothing about it, clear her in his eyes, and show him that you are resolved to ſtifle the feelings conceived involuntarily in your heart."

Rousseau overwhelmed him with gratitude for this advice. He swore to follow it, and a day or two later informed Diderot that he had done so, and the letter had gone off, and that his heart was at peace once more.

He did, in fact, cease seeing the Countess for a week, made out he was pleased with his self-maſtery, and yet he has subsequently missed no opportunity of seeing her whenever she could not manage to avoid him.

A few days after you left, Diderot met Saint-Lambert at Baron d'Holbach's. They spoke of Rousseau and the Marquis let drop some expression of contempt. Diderot, knowing how ſtraight and generous he is, was surprised that he should be unfair, and took him aside to ask the reason why. The Marquis seemed not to want to give his reason, and so Diderot, with his usual outspokenness, finally told him that Rousseau deserved better treatment at his hands after the letter he had written him. "What letter are you talking about?" said the Marquis. "The only letter I have from him is one that ought to be answered with a good stout ſtick." The Philosopher ſtood petrified—there were explanations on both sides and the thing was cleared up. In a word, the Marquis informed Diderot that the letter was simply a long sermon on the nature of the liaison between himself (Saint-Lambert) and Countess d'Houdetot, which was described as disgraceful and in it Rousseau also denounced him for a scoundrel in abusing Count d'Houdetot's truſt in him. You will observe that the Countess is in possession of more than twenty letters from Rousseau, more or less passionate, and she has shown them to Saint-Lambert, whereas Rousseau had sworn to Diderot that he would die rather

than declare his love to the Countess. The Philosopher, bewildered by this discovery, wrote to Rousseau the next day, reproaching him for having deceived him; and as Rousseau did not reply Diderot made up his mind to go and see him yesterday and have it out with him. This evening, on his return, he wrote me the letter of which I send you a copy, for it is a fine letter and worthy to be preserved. This morning he came to see me and told me all about his visit. Rousseau was by himself at the end of the garden and seeing Diderot in the distance, he roared in a voice of thunder, his face aflame, "What have you come here for?" "I have come to find out," replied the Philosopher, "whether you are mad or bad."

"You have known me for fifteen years," Rousseau returned. "You know I am not bad, and I will prove to you that I am not mad. Follow me." He then led him to his study, opened a little box full of papers, and took out some twenty letters which he seemed to sort out with some care, from among the other papers. "Now," said he, "here are the Countess's letters, pick out any one you like, and read my vindication." The very first one picked out by Diderot contained the bitterest reproaches from the Countess for his having taken advantage of her confidence to make her uneasy about her relations with the Marquis, while all the time he was not ashamed to lay traps, and employ tricks and the most wily sophisms in order to seduce her. "Ah, indeed, you're mad," cried Diderot, "to have let me read this, read it yourself —it's plain enough." Rousseau turned pale, stammered, and then went off into a fit of inconceivable rage, flew out against the indiscreet intermeddling of friends, and wouldn't admit he was in the wrong. Did you ever know anything so crazy? We are indebted for this information to the fact that Diderot was so very indignant. I am sure he would never

have mentioned the matter, had he not been forced to in self-defence. And now Rousseau is angry with him for having spoken to the Marquis, and openly accuses him of having given away his secret, a most stupid thing for Rousseau to do, for by so doing he compels Diderot to tell it in order to avoid appearing a false friend. And this is the man who drew up a code of friendship, who needs to be pardoned himself all day long, and who never overlooks a single thing in others. I never want to give him another thought. . . .

Letter from M. Diderot to M. Grimm

That man is mad. I went to see him and reproached him with the enormity of his conduct with the wholehearted vigour of one possessed of a sense of honour and under stress of the last lingering feeling for one who has been an old and a very great friend—reproached him for the tears shed at Madame d'Epinay's feet at the very moment when he was bringing the gravest charges against her to me—the odious apology he sent to you (in which there was not one single decent excuse), the letter he proposed to send to Saint-Lambert, supposed to be for the easing of his conscience with regard to feelings for which he blamed himself, and which in reality, far from being a confession of an involuntary passion, was a letter of excuse for having made Madame d'Houdetot uneasy about her own love-affair. And even now how much do I know? I am not satisfied with his replies: I had not the courage to tell him so, I preferred to leave him the miserable consolation of thinking that he had taken me in. Long life to him! He stood up for himself with a cold fury that was distressing to me. I fear that he is utterly hardened.

Adieu, my friend, let us be and continue to be honourable men, the condition of those who have

fallen from that estate terrifies me. Adieu, my friend, I embrace you and most affectionately. I cast myself into your arms as one afraid. In vain I try to compose some verses, but athwart my work that man's presence comes: it troubles me: I feel as if a damned soul stood at my side: he is damned for certain. Adieu, my friend.

Grimm, this is just the effect I should have upon you were I ever to take to evil ways: honestly I would rather be dead. Perhaps all this that I am writing you is not exactly common sense, but I do assure you that never have I felt such sorrow of soul as I feel now.

Oh, my friend, how terrible it is to see a wicked, conscience-stricken man! Burn, destroy this sheet of paper, never let your eyes fall on it again. May I never see that man more: he would make me believe in the devil and hellfire. If ever I am compelled to revisit him, I am sure I shall be in a tremble all the way as I go: I was in a feverish condition as I returned. I am vexed with myself for not letting him see the horror with which he inspired me, and I can only forgive myself by reflecting that you, with all your firmness, could not have done it in my place. I'm not sure that he would not have killed me. His shouts could be heard right at the other end of the garden—and I saw his face! Adieu, my friend, I shall come and see you to-morrow. I will go and see if I can find a good man by whose side to seat myself, who will soothe me and drive from my soul this infernal something that grips and gnaws it. Poets have done well to place a vast interval betwixt heaven and hell. Indeed, my hand trembles.

To a Monsieur N., who had corresponded with him, Diderot wrote:

Virtue is preferable to all else in the world, and if we do not realise this fact, it shows that we ourselves are corrupt and insufficiently endowed with virtue to appreciate its value. This is not so much a letter as

a talk with you, a talk such as I used to have with that man (Rousseau) who went and buried himself in the depths of the woods where his heart grew sour and his ways perverted. How I pity him! Bethink you that I loved him, and that I recall him, and see him, all by himself, torn between crime and remorse, with the deep waters beside him. . . . Often the thought of him will cause me a heart-pang. Mutual friends have passed their verdict on him and me. I have kept all these friends, and not one remains to him.

It is an atrocious thing to publicly accuse an old friend even when he is guilty: but by what name can such conduct be stigmatised if the friend happens to be innocent, by what name can one designate the accuser if, in his heart, he knows that he whom he accuses is guiltless?[1]

I much fear, Monsieur, that your compatriot broke with me because he could no longer endure the sight of me. For two years past I have been learning from him the lesson of how to overlook private affronts, but this one is public, and I know no way of condoning that. I have not read his last work. I have been told that it is of a religious turn. If that is so, I have hope of him at last.

Letter from Rousseau to Madame d'Epinay

If one died of grief, I should not now be alive, but at last I have made up my mind what to do. Friendship is dead between us, but dead friendship has its rights which I can respect. I have not forgotten your kindness to me, and you can rely on my being as grateful to you as one can possibly be towards some one for whom one no longer cares. Further explana-

[1] The note relative to Diderot in Rousseau's preface to *La Lettre sur les Spectacles* consisted of a quotation from Ecclesiasticus, Chap. XXII, verses 21, 22, followed by the words "I had a strict and sage Aristarchus: I have him no longer: I desire him no longer. Yet I shall mourn his loss for ever—and more for the love I bore him than for his assistance in my literary work."

tion would be useless. My conscience is my judge and I refer you to yours.

I wanted to leave the Hermitage and I ought to have done so, but they[1] say that I ought to stay on here till the Spring, and since my friends will have it so, I will remain here with your kind permission.

Madame d'Epinay's reply to M. Rousseau

After having shown you every possible mark of friendship and sympathy for several years, there is nothing left for me to do but pity you. You are a very unfortunate person. I only wish your conscience was as easy as mine, for you may find this requisite for a reposeful life.

Since you wish to leave the Hermitage, and since it is proper that you should do so, I am surprised that your friends are keeping you there. For my part I never consult my friends as to my duty, and I have nothing further to say to you about yours.

Writing to Grimm, Madame d'Epinay gave a picture of life in Geneva, of the clubs there, of the ladies who walked out unattended by a servant, which she found pleasant, of tea-drinking in the afternoon, and then she described the Voltaire *ménage*.

I spent the other day at Voltaire's, where I was greeted with a consideration, respect and attention that I feel like regarding as my due, but to which I am barely accustomed as yet. He asked me a lot about you, Diderot and all our friends. He did his utmost to make himself agreeable—no very difficult matter for him. For all that, my first impression is that if I had to live with either, I would prefer Diderot, who, by the way, is not recognised here as he ought

[1] i.e. Madame d'Houdetot.

to be. Could you believe it, they only mention d'Alembert in speaking of the Encyclopedia? I told them the facts, and what I felt bound to say. I only stated the truth, but had I lied, I should have been believed just the same. When I speak, they are all eyes and mouths, as well as ears, which is something new, and makes me laugh.

Voltaire's niece is enough to make one die of laughing—a little, fat, woman, an absolute ball, about fifty years of age, such a woman as never was—ugly and good-hearted, a quite unintentional and not unkindly liar: not really clever, but seeming so: she talks at the top of her voice and is very positive, discusses politics, writes verses, sometimes talks sense and sometimes utter nonsense, and withal is not too terribly affected, and above all treads on no one's corns, and over and above all has a little dash of fondness for the men which peeps through her self-imposed restraint. She adores her uncle, both as uncle and as a man, and Voltaire is very fond of her, and makes fun of her and thinks the world of her. In a word the house is a rendezvous of opposite types and a very amusing place for an on-looker.

Extract from letter from M. Grimm to Madame d'Epinay

. . . Would you like me to tell you the one thing that has sometimes hurt me—just the least bit, something that I have noticed. I am, I tell myself, sometimes, the one man who has less influence with Madame d'Epinay than any other. Folk without any character have bent her to their will, bad people have had no difficulty in getting her to do most questionable things, but I who can truly say that, on every occasion, her welfare has been my sole object, have often noticed that she thinks that self-regard or self-interest has been at the bottom of the advice which she, therefore, con-

siders mistaken on my part. The result has been that on some occasions, critical for herself, I have not dared insist on my point of view, nor oppose what she has done, for fear of being suspected of feelings foreign to my nature, and I have had to watch for the approaching storm powerless to avert it. This, my loving friend, is what has worried me sometimes, but I am sure that, by perseverance and trust, I shall win your mind as I have won your heart, and I rather think that I am not far from the attainment of this blessing, and if you would have me tell you all, I am hurt to see that you do not think me sufficiently generous and fair to be forgetful of self, when I should be so. . . .

So you dined with Voltaire. I do not see why you should decline his invitations so persistently. You should try to get on well with him, and make the most of one, who is the most fascinating, agreeable, and most celebrated man in Europe. As long as you do not make him your intimate friend, all will be well. Good night, my beloved and adorable friend, my one and only blessing, whom I miss every instant, and whom I shall ever love more than my life. . . .

To this Madame d'Epinay made an affectionate response and proceeded: My friend, I am so afraid of going too fast that I prefer to go too slowly, and that is why I was in no hurry to respond to the advances of Voltaire, and why I shall continue to go on as I have begun. It was a good thing I did so: he behaves very differently with me than he has with some others, so every one tells me. Up to now he has never met a woman who has not thrown herself at his head and wanted him to sing her praises and taken all his pretty speeches literally. He doesn't like any restraint, and is very erratic in his fancies and maybe the same in his feelings, and so he has allowed himself rather more freedom with women with whom he was not on

intimate terms than he should have done. He has written them verses and then made fun of them. As I do not care for verses, nor for fished-for compliments, and as I do not like to be made fun of, I have taken a very different tone with him, as he has seen. He receives me with the greatest respect and most marked cordiality. I get on very well with his niece, but I manage to let the uncle see (not in any silly way, at least I do not think so, and it has gone down very well with him) that my homage is all for him.

Letter from Rousseau to Madame d'Epinay

Montmorency, 17th December, 1757

Nothing more natural nor more necessary, Madame, than that I should quit your house since you do not approve of my remaining there. On your refusal to permit me to spend the rest of the winter at the Hermitage, I left the place on December 15th. It has been my fate to live there, against the wishes of my friends and against my own wish, and to leave the place in the same manner.

I thank you for the stay that you induced me to make there, and I should thank you more warmly had I paid less dearly for it. Moreover, you may well consider me unfortunate; and well I may be, as no one knows better than I. It may be a misfortune to make a mistake in the choice of one's friends, but to have one's eyes opened is no less cruel a misfortune.

Your gardener's wages are paid up to 1st January.

Madame d'Epinay's reply to M. Rousseau

I only received your letter of the 17th December, Monsieur, yesterday: it was sent to me in a box of odds and ends which has been all this time coming. I will only reply to your footnote, for as for your letter, I can't make it out, and were we able to talk it all

over together, I should simply wish to put down all that has passed to a misunderstanding. I return to the footnote. You may remember, Monsieur, that we agreed that the wages of the gardener at the Hermitage should be handed to him by you, so that he should feel that he was in your employ, and that you might be spared the absurd and unseemly fuss that his predecessor made about them. The fact that his first quarter's wages were remitted to you, and that I arranged with you, a few days before I left, about the repayment of the advances you had made, is proof of this. I know that you demurred at first, but I had begged you to make the advance, it was a simple matter to repay you, and the arrangement was made. Cahouet has notified me that you refused to accept the money. There has surely been some muddle here. I gave orders that the money should be returned to you, and I see no reason for your wanting to pay my gardener, in the face of our arrangement, and for over and above the period that you were living at the Hermitage. I trust, then, Monsieur, that when you reconsider these points of which I have the honour to remind you, you will not refuse to accept return of the payments you have kindly made on my behalf.

Extract from a letter from Countess d'Houdetot to Madame d'Epinay

You know, my dear sister, something of our hermit's peppery temper. You must be so used to his character after your ten years' friendship that you cannot but feel leniently towards him, and you will attach no more importance to anything he may have said than he, himself, will attach to it when he comes to reconsider his words calmly. I must tell you that I did urge him not to leave the Hermitage. Leave him to himself for a bit, and to his own reflections, and you will find him what he has always been and should be, your respectful, grateful friend.

CHAPTER XVI

1758–1783

From Madame d'Epinay to M. Grimm

One hasn't a minute for anything when one's with Voltaire, so I have only just time to seal up my letter to you, my friend. I have been spending the day just with him and his niece, and he has really quite tired himself with telling me anecdotes. When I asked his leave to write you a few lines, so that you should not be anxious about my health, which is good, he said he would stay and watch what my two, big dark eyes had to say as I wrote. He is sitting in front of me, poking the fire, and laughing, and says I am making fun of him and look as if I am criticising him. I told him that I was writing down what he was saying as it was better than anything I could think of. . . .

From Madame d'Epinay to M. Grimm

Well, my friend, I should not care to live continually with him (Voltaire). He has no fixed principles, relies too much on his memory, which he frequently abuses, and I think his conversation suffers rather in consequence. His talk is a good deal repetition, and he never gives anyone else a chance to get a word in edgeways. There's no general conversation with him, and he is snubbing. He will argue on both sides as much as you please, always with fresh charm, it is true, and yet, all the time, as if he is laughing at all and sundry, himself included. He has not an atom of philosophy in his head. He simply

bristles with petty, childish prejudices, which one would possibly overlook, for the sake of his charm, sparkling wit, and originality, if he did not set up to be so unprejudiced. He is amusingly inconsistent and withal very funny to watch. But I do not care for people who merely amuse me. As for Madame his niece she is too utterly comical. . . .

Grimm wrote that he had been asked if it were true that she was forever in Voltaire's house and did the honours there. He had replied that M. de Voltaire had shown her much civility and that she had dined with him twice. Grimm attributed the gossip to M. d'Epinay, who boasted of Voltaire's friendly advances to his wife "as if it wasn't the natural thing to expect," said Grimm. He advised her to confine herself strictly to the weather in writing to her husband, and to impress upon Linant to hold his tongue about her doings. He had received, he said, " a letter from Saint-Lambert who reproached me with being too down on the Hermit. He draws his conclusions rather casually, and without knowing much about the matter. However, he is a very fair man. Good night, my loving friend, I must rest my eyes, which are rather bad."[1]

Letter from Madame d'Epinay to M. Grimm

We have just got back from Voltaire's : he was more amiable, gayer, more full of nonsense than when he was a lad of fifteen : he paid me the most amusing compliments.

" Your patient," said he to M. Tronchin, " is truly philosophical. She has discovered the grand secret of making the very most of her life. I wish I could be her pupil, but the tree is bent, and I am old. Here we are a flock of fools who, on the contrary, make the

[1] Grimm became practically blind in later years.

very worst of our lives. What's to be done about it? Ah, my philosopher! You are an eagle caged in gauze. If I had not a leg in the grave, I would have said all that in verse!"

Now came Rousseau's final letter to Madame d'Epinay (27*th February*, 1758) *to which, as she told Grimm, she made no reply.*[1]

I see, Madame, that my letters to you are always, most unfortunately, late in arriving. However, one thing is certain, and that is that yours of January 17th was only handed me by M. Cahouet on the 17th of this month, so it looks as if your correspondent held it up during the whole of the interval. I shall not attempt to explain what you are determined not to understand, and I stand amazed that anyone so intellectual can be so unintelligent, but it ought not to surprise me, for long ago you boasted to me of this very defect.

As I never did intend to accept any repayment for the gardener's wages, I am not likely to be of any other mind now. As to the point you raise about my having consented, that consent was of the vague kind one makes to avoid or postpone unpleasantness, and practically amounted to a refusal. It is true that, in September, 1756, you did remit me, through your coachman, the money for your former gardener, and I settled his account.

It is also correct that I have always paid his successor myself. As for his wages for the first three quarters that you say were remitted to me, I really think, Madame, that you must be aware that is not the case: the fact being that they were not even offered me. With regard to the extra fortnight's wages (owing to

[1] Brunet's note: Rousseau in his Confessions says he did not answer the letter of Jan. 17th. However, here is the reply that he wrote a month later and of which we have the original.

my leaving the Hermitage before the winter quarter had expired), you will agree that it was not worth while deducting that amount. God forbid that I should consider this an adequate return for my stay at the Hermitage. My heart does not assess friendly offices at so low a rate, but at the price you, yourself, fixed, never was lodging let so dear. I hear of strange talk in Paris circulated by your correspondents about me, and I therefore conclude what sort of things (though not quite so strong) you are saying at Geneva. Is there really so much pleasure to be found in damaging other people?—damaging former friends? Never mind. I, for my part, shall never taste that pleasure, not even in my own defence. Do as you will, say what you like, I have but one answer for you—silence, patience, and a blameless life. Meanwhile if you have some new torment in store for me, out with it, quick, for I feel that you may not have the pleasure very much longer.

From Grimm, Madame d'Epinay learnt that Saint-Lambert and Countess d'Houdetot had utterly broken with Rousseau, and saw him for what he was, and had begun to see that she could not have acted otherwise.

Grimm, anxious to join Madame d'Epinay at Geneva, was detained by Diderot who required his help in the work on which he was engaged. She, fretting for her lover, and aware of Diderot's opinion of her, fancied that Diderot was opposed to seeing his collaborator running after a mistress he (Diderot) did not approve of. However, letters from M. de Jully and from M. Tronchin informing Grimm that Madame d'Epinay was very ill, settled the matter. "Tomorrow," he wrote her, "by five o'clock in the evening I shall have left Paris. . . . I shall travel day and night and on Tuesday or Wednesday I hope to be near you."

Evidently Grimm's departure caused some talk in his circle, for Diderot wrote:

While you were on your way, our friends supposed us to be both in the country, and only yesterday did they discover that you had gone. I turned up like a ghost at the Baron's, where a party was in full swing. First I drew him apart and told him your news, and then in the middle of dinner he repeated it all aloud. I was not really pleased with any of them on that occasion, except the Marquis de Croismare. Everyone said his say on the matter. . . . Return when you please, if soon, 'twill be with a mind content, if later, with a mind yet more content: whatever you do, you will always feel satisfied, because in your heart is principle, which will never fail you. Heed but that voice, where'er you be, and when back in Paris once more, heed only it. Happily that voice speaks clear within you, drowning all the petty cackle of the mischief-mongers, so that it cannot reach your ear. I wish you happiness where'er you be. I love you dearly and always love you whether I have you with me or whether you are far from me. . . .

In a short note in reply, Grimm observed that he knew the Baron and company would disapprove of his rushing away like that and that nothing short of her death would convince them that it really was illness that obliged Madame d'Epinay to stay at Geneva, but as long as she recovered he and she would not care what was said.

Letter from M. Grimm to M. Diderot

1759

What! Diderot—still at it! Still surprised at the injustice and inconsistency of men? Ah, don't you see that it is you who are unjust in being indignant with them? Only look to receive from your fellow-men what they have to give you—or in other words,

expect nothing or next to nothing. That's the great secret of being just. No, you're not mistaken—you can tell them all with a clear conscience that Madame d'Epinay was at death's door on arriving here, that during her eighteen months' stay here, Tronchin has kept her alive, as by magic, and it is only during the last three months that she has been out of danger, that she is still not fit to stand the journey and that she will not lose a moment in getting back to Paris when her cure is certain. But I tremble for her, lest all the sacrifices she has made for the sake of her health may not all be thrown away in view of what the future has in store for her! The senselessness, cold-heartedness, indecency and folly of her husband are something inconceivable. Good God, how that woman is to be pitied! I should not be so distressed about her were she as strong in physique as she is in courage. She is gentle and trusting—she is peace-loving and likes quiet above all things—but owing to her circumstances, there is an incessant demand upon her for conduct forced and foreign to her temperament, and there is nothing more wearing, or more destructive to an instrument naturally frail.

I burnt your letter as you wished me to, but do not ask further sacrifices of this kind of me: you know that I like to keep all that comes from my Diderot, and I could have kept this one as I have the others, without the slightest inconvenience. In the first place Madame d'Epinay never evinces awkward curiosity about what does not concern her, and in addition, believe me, she is quite indifferent to all these false judgments, and petty criticisms made by people who do not even profess to be her friends. . . . You must not, I think, count on our returning before September. That date, though distant, already alarms the poor patient. I exhaust for her encouragement every philosophic dictum that is most true, and yet, I must admit, exceedingly uncon-

soling to a tender heart. The fact is, I try, not so much to console her, as to lessen that frantic state of love which would be the joy of my existence were we destined to live in the future as we have lived during these last six months. She will always be the object of my whole-hearted affection and care, but I shall probably be diverted from love's occupations by duties and business which seem likely to increase, and give me the satisfaction of feeling that I am no longer a useless, idle member of society. The Court of C—— is urging me to act as its Correspondent. I should like the work, it would suit me well and give me a chance of showing what I can do. I am only waiting for the Prince's consent (which I hope to receive quite soon) to accept the offer, and then I shall only accept subject to their being willing to wait until I have returned to Paris, for I cannot leave Madame d'Epinay to travel alone, and I would not trust anyone but myself to look after her on so tiring a journey. Do not mention my plans to a soul. On secrecy, their realisation may possibly depend. Good day, my friend, keep up your spirits, and let me always hear that you are well in body and mind. . . .

From Voltaire came a little note, written to Madame d'Epinay, from Les Délices, on the 19th October, 1759, in which he canonised Tronchin, worker of miracles, for having cured her, and prayed God, as did all Geneva, to afflict her frequently with minor ailments that " will send you back to us once more ".

Note.—Diderot was far too friendly with Grimm not to become at last the friend of Grimm's devoted mistress. He realised that he had made a mistake with regard to her, and did his best to repair it, and a friendship was established between them that lasted until her death in 1783. In a letter to Mlle Voland he gives a charming description of a visit to the lady of La Chevrette.

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